



Books are keys
to wisdom's treasure;
Books are paths
that upward lead;
Books are gates
to lands of pleasure;
Books are friends,
Come, let us read.

THIS BOOK BELONGS TO

Jerry Williams



Elite Beauty Parlor
WASHINGTON D. C.

Dear Mom,
you should of been
here to see what
happened

I am still here

J. P. Jones

THE SPOKESMAN'S SECRETARY

Being the Letters of Mame to Mom

By

UPTON SINCLAIR



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UPTON SINCLAIR

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LETTER I

IN WHICH I JOIN THE HIGHER-UPS

DEAR MOM:

You been complaining there ain't enough news in my letters, well you sure will get a load of it this trip of the postman. Your Mame has been cast for little Cinderella in the big political show and the fairy-coach is waiting at the door.

This is how it come about, the place was busy and every girl had a customer but Florabelle and me, when a gentleman comes in, a top-notch I can see and takes us in with a glance. He don't need but one because Florabelle makes up her complexion in a dark room and ain't got the sense to look it over by daylight. So he comes to my table and sits and says, "Go to it, lady."

He has got good hands not soft nor flabby like many of the big fellows, but you can see he ain't had to skin them with hard work. I starts to washing them and gets a look out of the corner of my eye and I see he's somewhere in the forties and a bit of grey in his hair. His cuffs is new and clean and everything quiet and exactly right.

I says, "Fine weather we're having," and he makes the shortest kind of a noise that means yes and I see he's thinking about something and would rather not be bothered—but what did he come into a manicure parlor for? So I looks sympathetic and says in a spiritual voice, "There's sure a lot of troubles in the world ain't there?"

They always shows their surprise in their fingers. He says, "How did you find that out?" Says I, "I got my own but you needn't worry my business is to listen to the gentlemen's."

"Is that a part of the job?" says he and I tells him it's the principal part. "They want to tell their troubles to some other woman;" and I looks up, and there is wrinkles of fun in the corner of his eyes.

But they don't last long he looks serious again and says, "It may be some other woman could give me a little advice just now." I says, "She can if she's the right woman." But still he's kind of hesitating to take the plunge so I give him another push. "Is it some mystery of the female soul you can't make out?"

"It is just that," he says; and I asks, "She can't make up her mind that she loves you?" He laughs and says, "No, it ain't anything like that, you been reading novels. I

am a married man and got three children growing up," he says. "Ah, me!" says I. "You should hear some of the stories about married gentlemen!"

I looks at him again and see he's what they call a go-getter. First I think maybe he's the secretary of the Hardware Dealers' Association that's in town but then I guess he's a lawyer come to lobby here in our national capital. So I rubs away at his nails and says, "Is it the wife?" He thinks for a minute and then all of a sudden it busts out, "My God!" And then he waits again and says kind of solemn-like, "Tell me this do all women have to go crazy?"

I make a guess at his age and I says, "How old is your wife—if you know?" "She's forty-two," says he. "Oh, yes," says I; and then, "She can't make up her mind what she wants, and she can't sit still in one room—"

"Good God," says he, "it is worse than that, she is got the angina pectoris."

"Oh, poor soul!" I says. I hadn't never heard of it but it sounded serious.

"But it's different from any sort of angina pectoris you ever heard of," he goes on. "It's a travelling angina pectoris. One week it's in the shoulders and the next week it's gone to the stomach and the week after that it's in the knee."

"I suppose you've took her to the doctors?" says I.

"Doctors?" says he. "I've worn out four sets of tires taking her to doctors. The ordinary doctors won't do at all it has got to be a specialist of the knee, or the stomach or what you will. And he tells her there ain't anything there but then she thinks maybe he didn't look careful enough or maybe I called him on the phone and told him to spare her nervous system so she has to go to another one without telling me—but he always tells me with a bill!"

He says it without any smile and he sits there in the bottomest pit of the dumps so I says, "I suppose you know what is the matter with the poor soul at her time." "They tell me it's the change of life," he says; and I says; "Some ladies in my profession have got a different name they call it the change of wife."

Then again I feels the start in his fingers and I know he's looking at my head bowed over his nails. "Is that an old gag," says he, "or do you make them?"

"You just seen it come out of the mint?" says I.

"Well," says he, "I'm sorry I don't own a gold-mine."

Says I, "There is a plenty of gold-diggers in the manicure profession, and you might of had some of them trimming

your cuticle right now if you had of went to some other table. But I am one that makes it plain to a customer that he is the butter."

"Butter?" says he, and I give him a flash out of the corner of my eye. "Nine hours every day I earns my daily bread in the Elite Beauty Parlors; and then if in the evening some gentleman invites me to dinner, he's the butter." So then I seen that we was friends, and I knew I would like that dairy.

But still he was kind of shy and it wasn't till I was done that he come right down to it, he was lonesome and would like to have me go to dinner with him the next evening but the trouble was he couldn't afford to go to no swell place on account of having so many people in this town that knew him. But I tells him that two is a company for me and we'll go to any quiet place that he likes. "You got to be extra careful," I says, "because Washington is an awful place for gossip."

"Yes," says he, "and the truth is I hold an especially prominent position. And so—you see—"

"Yes, I see perfectly," I says, "I know a gentleman when I meet one and I hope I know how to be a lady. You may count on me to play the game square."

But even that don't satisfy him he kind of hems around and he says, "You must understand, I am in a position where you will be sure to find out who I am right away."

"I see," says I, "and so you'll have to give me your real name? You may trust me, Mr. —er—"

"Er-Edgerton," says he, not more than one-third sure that he wants to.

"Mr. Edgerton," says I and he see's I'm thinking it over. "No," he says, "you never heard it before, it ain't a name that is advertised on toilet soap, nor on the silver screen. In fact I think just now it's the least advertised name in the whole U. S. A."

"In the secret service?" says I for I admit I was intreeged though I ain't sure how to spell it. "The most secret of all services," says he. "I'm the Secretary to the Spokesman."

And there is where your Mame proved herself the prize dumbbell. "The Spokesman?" says I. "Who is he?"

He laughs as if I had said something specially funny. "What do you read in the newspapers?"

"Well," says I, "I read the divorce news of course because that is what the customers want to talk about. And

I read the murders because I like them. And I read Mme. Prinker's beauty hints, and how to grow lean by rolling."

"But you don't read what the Spokesman has to say?"

"No," says I. "What paper does he write for?"

He laughs again, like that was an awful boner. "It's on the front page of all the papers," he says. "But you haven't missed much. The Spokesman is a Man who lives in a great white house and He is a Strong Silent Man and it appears that all Strong Silent Men have to talk a great deal and this One has got no idea what to say. So I am the man who tells Him what to say. And twice every week the reporters for all the newspapers of the whole world gather in a room and listen to Him say what I have told Him to say and a couple of thousand newspapers all over the world pay a couple of hundred thousand dollars to have it telegraphed to them and they print it and I don't know how many hundreds of millions of people read it and they all have to think that it is the Spokesman who spoke it, so you see how important it is that I should keep hid."

Well, Mom, by that time I seen what had come to me, and I sat hardly able to lift my eyelids, to say nothing of my tongue.

"I have got to have a session the day after tomorrow," the gentleman goes on, "and I have no idea what I am going to say. How can I pay any compliments to American institutions that I haven't paid them twenty times before? So I'll give you an address of a little Greek restaurant that I know and if you'll meet me there at seven-thirty tomorrow evening you may be able to give me a few ideas of what the whole world would like to have said to it the next morning."

And so then he went out, Mom; and here is your baby Mame sitting in her six by eight bedroom with the smoke of her pork-chop still in the air writing to ask you if you have any ideas of what to tell the world for God's sake send them quick for I have got my foot on the ladder and it's the high altitudes for me. And Mom you dunno how grateful I am to you for the wise training you give me, I felt his eyes running over me but I never trembled for I had remembered what you taught me, always to keep my dressing table by the window and put it on by daylight and never to use no peroxide at all unless I was going to use it every night.

Your loving

MAME.

LETTER II

IN WHICH I GO BEHIND THE SCENES

DEAR MOM:

The first thing I got to explain is that I have changed my name again. The fashions in names changes very fast and you think you have got a good one but you find it is a flop. But I never was altogether pleased with Ysabel and have decided to make it Rosabelle. I think it is much prettier because when you say Rosabelle Riggs both the words begins with the same letter and a gentleman told me that is called illiteration and a name is much sweller when it is illiterate; all the movie stars are doing it they say you can't get into the movies at all unless you have got an illiterate name. The new girl at our place is named Mary May Marie, and that is nice too only you have to say the last name French fashion, "if you don't," I says to her, "it sounds like a hint to the gentlemen." It is getting to be swell to have French names. Ada Huggins has changed hers to Adaire and then Hattie Schoenstein she says, "What shall I make mine?" and I says, "Why not try Hotaire?" and that is how I get into trouble being too bright altogether.

I want you to please explain to Pop, so that he will not have his feelings hurt that I do not like the good old-fashioned honest label of Mame that he gave me. This is not an old-fashioned beauty parlor that I work in and you can't expect to know what is considered shiek if you spend your whole life in the gas-house district of Camden New Jersey. And I know Mom how you gave up a glorious stage career for your little ones, and this little one is much obliged but I got my own career to make now and I sure don't want no enemy to paste the label of Mame onto me. But of course I'm always the same to the home folks your affectionately.

P. S. Well, I have just got back from dinner with my new gentleman friend. I will not say much for a Greek restaurant. It seems that the way you tell Greek cooking is that everything is swimming in the juices of baby lamb only when it gets a little cold it seems like what we at home used to call mutton suet. Mr. Edgerton explains that the Greeks is a pastoral people they have only sheeps and goats. But I would of thought they would of learned the uses of beefsteak when they come to the good old U. S. A. But I

suppose they have got to be different as that is called "local color" when you go out slumming or dining with a gentleman friend.

But oh Mom the conversation was the most intellectual that I ever listened to and I am so excited I can hardly make my letters good. It was just like going to Hollywood and being took in behind the scenes where you could watch Mary Pickford putting on her make-up. You that has been a stage queen can understand how it is everything is so different behind the scenes you would hardly know that it is the same show at all. I always thought I was the little wise girl and nobody could put nothing over on me but now I am behind the scenes of the political show and oh my God to think that I was ever one of the boobs that sat out in front of the curtain and laughed and cried over them old old gags!

First Mr. Edgerton put me wise to the leading gentleman that is called the Spokesman. Mr. Edgerton has to spend a lot of time with Him every day, teaching Him His role, and he told me all about it, and it was just like I was there in the great white house where He acts.

It seems that this Spokesman was born and raised in the State of Florida and that is a very cold state with a great lot of mountains that is covered with snow most of the time. It is very rocky ground and hard to raise anything on and so the people in Florida has got to work hard for a living all the time and they are very saving and apt to be stingy for which Mr. Edgerton says you can't blame them seeing how nature has been a step-mother to them all. So this Spokesman's one idea is to save pennies and when He was the governor of this State of Florida He used to live in one hotel room and when the bankers and the big business men thought that was not dignified enough and He wanted to show them that He could be as swell as they was He took two hotel rooms.

The Spokesman is a little Man, kind of stoop-shouldered and pinched-up like and He is very much worried because He is not imposing looking like He had ought to be to fit into that big white house that He has got to act in. Him and Mr. Edgerton had many consultations about it and Mr. Edgerton told Him to face it out and make a joke of it and tell His visitors that He was like a singed cat a lot better than He looks. At first that hurt His feelings but He must of thought it over and decided it was His best bet and now He says it to His visitors. His face is kind of wizened

and some nasty woman said that He had been weaned on a pickle but Mr. Edgerton ain't ever advised Him to say that to His visitors.

Well now He is the Spokesman and He has got the job of telling the American people what to do and what to think. And it seems a queer job for Him Mr. Edgerton says because if He had His own way He would sit for hours and never say nothing. He will listen to all Mr. Edgerton says for Him to say and then bid him good bye and never say if He is going to say it or not but He always says it provided it's two things—first it must be complimentary to American institutions and second it must have to do with saving money.

Mr. Edgerton explained to me about what is called the "policy" of the Spokesman and I don't see how I could ever of been happy to be so ignorant as I used to be. I just never knew nothing Mom I would hear Pop talking about these things, and it would go right over my head but now I'm going to learn all about it. It seems that the way money is wasted is that the government takes it for taxes and pays it to a lot of office holders that sits with their feet on the top of their desks. So the Spokesman is going to stop the taxes and let the rich people keep their money then He says they will start factories to make things and there will be plenty of wages for the working people and everybody will be happy. I never would of thought of it myself but I seen it right away and how stupid I was when I felt mean about people that had a lot of money and spent it on what I thought was foolishness like monkey dinners and shampain baths and such. I see now that no matter how foolish it is it all makes work for working people and so it is all economy like the Spokesman wants it to be.

I asked Mr. Edgerton if that was one of the ideas he had taught to the Spokesman but he said no he hadn't needed to do it because when you are in the business of running for offices it is a thing you come to understand for yourself no matter how dumb you may be that you have got to take care of the rich people because they have got to put up their money for campaign funds for you so that you can pay wages for workingmen that makes red fire and sky-rockets and campaign banners and processions and other things that educates the voters about not taxing the rich.

And Mr. Edgerton says that the Spokesman went out and hired the biggest banker in the whole country to help Him teach the people about this policy of His. And I said gee how could He of got up nerve to pay such a big man

what He would of had to pay? But Mr. Edgerton explained that He didn't have to pay the big banker nothing extra because the banker had been paying pretty close to a million dollars in taxes every year himself and naturally it was worth something to him to get a chanst to dump a load like that off of his own shoulders. And that is easy to see too and I begin to see it wouldn't be so hard to run a government as I thought it would be because everybody would be looking to get something and so they would all be ready to work for the government cheap. And Mr. Edgerton says that is just how it goes because a lot of them worked for the government all through the war for a dollar a year and they was the most expensive men the government ever had let inside the ropes. And Mr. Edgerton says that the way I understand everything shows that I have a natural talent for political life.

He told me the name of this big banker that has been hired to take the taxes off of himself. I remember it was Lemon or Melon or something else to eat. Mr. Edgerton said I could remember it easy by the fact that they cut him every day in Wall Street and I said "I don't see why they should cut him when he is doing their work for them as well as for himself." And Mr. Edgerton thought that was very funny so I see there was some catch in it so I talked about something else as quick as I could.

But Mr. Edgerton says I can be very useful to him if I will and he showed me how. He says that he has been to college and has read a lot of high-brow things and that has spoiled him some for the job he has to do. He says he wants to keep close to the heart of the plain people to know how they feel and think and I can tell him. I had a wonderful spiel fixed up, about how I was the daughter of an old Virginia family that had been ruined in the civil war; but when I heard what he said I decided I had better forget my spiel so I confessed that my Pop was a gas-house worker in Camden New Jersey and he said that was fine that was exactly what he wanted. And so I told him the real truth about my name being Mame and so you can forget what I wrote you in the beginning of this letter which was wrote yesterday but I will send it to you all the same because it is wrote and you can see how I have growed under the influence of Mr. Edgerton.

And he says to me, "What do you think about the international situation?" And gee I was scared out of my wits I wanted to say, "Ask me something easy!" But I am going

to learn to play my part among these higher-ups and so I says, "I haven't thought so much about it of late." And he says, "It is changing so fast, you have got to think all of the time."

And there I sat racking my wooden brains to think of anything I had ever heard Pop say. And at last I thought of something and so I looked real wise and I says, "It seems to me the American people has got so used to having a good time they take it for granted. So the use of the international situation is to show them what real troubles is and make them grateful for their favors." And Mr. Edgerton looks at me and his eyes lights up and he says. "That's it exactly! That's the text for my tomorrow morning's interview!"

And then of course I was very much excited and I says, "You mean the Spokesman ain't never said that before?" And he says, "Well, if He has, it's been so long ago that He's forgot it. But that sentiment is right out of the heart of the plain people it has the true salt of homeliness that I'm looking for and torture my poor head trying to invent."

And so now, Mom, you can imagine how excited I am. The Spokesman is to give that interview tomorrow morning at ten o'clock to all the reporters of all the newspapers in the whole world and it will be in the second edition of the afternoon papers that gets out all over the whole world just a little before noon and make believe I won't pounce on a newsboy when I go out to get my glass of malted milk at the corner drug-store! Oh Mom you can't imagine the thrills of being a really influential person like

Your devoted

MAME.

LETTER III

IN WHICH I RING THE BELL

DEAR MOM:

Well, I suppose you seen my ideas in the papers. I have never had anything so wonderful happen to me in my whole life. There it was every bit of it and all fixed up in such fine language as I could never of thought of and sounding so very very wise. And to think that this greatest Man in the whole world has said it, and every newspaper in the whole world almost has published it on the front page.

Why Mom He didn't say hardly anything else at all. He made his whole interview out of that idea I have give to His secretary. Me poor little Mamie Riggs, manicurist in the Elite Beauty Parlors with just one copper cent in her pocket this night!

That is a fact! I spent three cents for that afternoon paper so I didn't have the price of my usual malted milk for lunch and had to take a glass of plain milk and a doughnut. But I didn't mind that, I went back to the shop feeling so smart the girls all seen there was something and they wanted to know, "What is it, Mame, you got a new beau?" That's all they ever think about of course.

I says, "No it ain't that it's something more great." But I didn't dare give them no hint because its what Mr. Edgerton calls a state secret. So Ada Higgins she wants you to call her Adaire now and did you ever hear of anything so silly, being ashamed of her origin and trying to put on side she says, "I know, it's that swell gent that was here a few days ago. What's his line Mame?"

And just then the phone rung and it was Mr. Edgerton calling and he wants me to have dinner with him again and of course then all the girls is buzzing like a lot of bees they never heard of such a thing as my not telling they always tell about their affairs because after all what have they got to talk about between customers with the pitiful narrow lives they live and no great ideas about world events and no way of getting behind the scenes of the political show and seeing how the actors is made up.

Well he says for me to meet him at a Chinese restaurant this time. It is over in Z street and a long ways and gee it is drizzling and I shall have wet feet when I get there. But I dassn't try to borrow a nickle from my landlady because my rent was due four days ago and I am side-stepping because I just had to get a new scarf to hide my old dress. It is all very well for Mr. Edgerton to talk about wanting to keep close to the plain people, and the rough honesty of them and all that, but no man wants to go out to dinner with a slouch you know that Mom and it ain't going to happen while I'm the lady. So now I'm off and tell Pop to send me some of his ideas about politics as quick as a postage stamp will bring them.

P. S. Well it was my first dinner a la Chink and we had chop suey and it is made out of chicken and something else that should be called guey instead of suey. But it is

hot and very filling and that is the principal thing when you are trying to pull through and go straight on eighteen-fifty per and rents what they is in the city of Washington, D. C. Mr. Edgerton brought me home in a taxi and now I have got my feet in bed and I couldn't go to sleep anyhow till they get warm, so I will tell you what happened.

Well of course we talked international affairs since that is the most interesting thing in the world, and what everybody talks here in high society. Mr. Edgerton says that when he told the Spokesman the great idea that I had give to him, He grunted, and that is eloquence from Him. And He told Mr. Edgerton to have it wrote out for Him and He even added a couple of sentences of His own because some of it was so important that He wanted to say it twiced.

And of course I had to be modest so I says, "I really didn't think it was so remarkable as that, it is what anyone would say."

And Mr. Edgerton says, "That's it exactly. What I have to do is to find out what anyone would say and say it for them."

"But why," I says—"when they can just as good say it for themselves?" So he explained that people likes to have things said for them it is less trouble and it pleases them to hear their own ideas, "it is like looking at themselves in a mirror, if you understand what I mean," says he and I says that most any woman would understand that.

And Mr. Edgerton says that the Spokesman likes to say things like the sort that I say, because it saves Him having to talk about other things that ain't so easy for Him to think about. The reporters asks Him questions and He don't know what to answer and then there is always people trying to get Him to do this and that and to say yes or no and He don't like to say either nor to do neither. The Spokesman's other name is Cautious, and He never does nothing He don't have to and He seldom does. He says that most problems solve themselves if you let them alone.

Says I, "What that generally means is that somebody else solves them." And Mr. Edgerton laughs and says, "Well, yes, but then if they solve them wrong it ain't your funeral."

And he showed me how it goes. There will be two big fellows fighting over some juicy bit of graft and they come to Washington and pull all the strings they know of each of them trying to get the Spokesman to give it to his gang. And the Spokesman listens polite to both of them and tells both of them He'll do the best he can and then He don't do nothing

and both of them hates Him like poison and calls Him all the names they can think of. But bye and bye they get tired of quarreling and patch up some sort of agreement to divide the graft and then they go off and think it over and say to themselves by golly that Guy is a slick one, He knows how to take care of Himself and that's the Sort we need to run the country.

Well just about that time a couple comes into the Chink restaurant a pair of swell lookers and I see they knows Mr. Edgerton. The gentleman gives him a bow and the lady too but then she gets a glimpse of me and she freezes up like she was hit by an artice cyclone and she goes by with her nose high up like an aeroplane. And I see that Mr. Edgerton is a bit flustered and don't know what to talk about next and I says, "It seems your lady friend don't like the way I look perhaps she thinks my hair is too decorative or some thing." And he smiles, kind of sickish like and I says, "Let me tell you how it is if you want to have anything pretty in the gas-house district of Camden New Jersey, you have got to carry it along with you." And he says, "Yes, I suppose so."

I see he is badly rattled so I says, "I want you to know that I know exactly how it is and you don't have to try to fool me or yourself. Everything is pure and sweet between us like we was the two babes in the woods but I know too you ain't going to get Washington smart society to believe it. And I can guess how it'll be if anybody tips off Mrs. Edgerton to the fact that her husband is doing research work among the plain people. By the way how's the poor soul getting along?"

"Well," he says, "just now the angina pectoris has moved on to one of her toes."

"Well," says I, "at least it's getting as far away from her mind as it can and maybe it'll move out altogether. But what I started to say is this if you think you better not see me any more—"

"No, no!" he says real anxious. "No, Miss Riggs, please don't desert me in this crisis."

"Crisis?" I says.

"Yes," says he. "You see, the Elks' convention is coming to our national capital next week and the Spokesman has got to deliver a full hour's speech to them and you just can't imagine how I shall be put to it to invent something different to say. Only think of it I've got to work up some new compliment to pay to the Constitution! And every Fourth of

July for a hundred and fifty years some twenty thousand orators have been warming up this old soup and putting in new flavors. Miss Riggs the great heart of the plain people has got to save me! You must tell me what to say—you and none other!"

So there I am up against it again and I wishing I could get home so as to see if a letter has come from Pop. "America," I says, "is a great country."

"Yes, I know," he says, "but why? And how? What makes it that way? What—"

"Hold on," I says, "one question at a time. It is very simple you get yourself mixed up by thinking too hard. Anybody can see that what makes America a great country is because there is so much of it. Ain't that so?"

"Yes," he says but kind of doubtful.

"And because there is so many people in it. Ain't that so?"

"I suppose so," he says but still like he didn't.

"You take these here Elks that is coming to Washington," I says. "Everybody knows the Elks is a great order and why? Because there is so many of them and they've got a pile of money and they come here and spend it and raise a hurrah and they own the town. Ain't that so?"

Yes of course he can't deny that is so. But still there is something eating him. "Surely Miss Riggs there must be something else—some ideas—"

"Ideas?" I says. "Don't you worry about ideas the people will tend to that, there is enough of them. If there is one person and he has got an idea," I says, "that is something but when there is a hundred million has got it, that's a hundred million times as much and if you don't think that's so you just go and ask Kayser Bill," I says.

And say, Mom, it was like a light begun to shine in his eyes. "Miss Riggs," he says, "do the people really believe that?"

"Of course they believe it," I says. "Who's going to stop them?"

And Mom, I thought he was going to reach across the table and grab my hand in spite of his lady friend across the way shooting eye-daggers at him. "Miss Riggs," he says, "you have saved me! You have restored my faith in the sublime principles of democracy! You have given me the theme of an immortal address a real piece of Elkoquence if you will pardon the pun. Upon these wings the Spokesman will soar to heights never before attained even by Him!"

And Mom, he is so pleased, he invites me to go home in a taxi; and how can I tell him that my feet is wet and froze, and I would of rather of walked?

Your happy

MAME.

LETTER IV

IN WHICH I GUESS A RIDDLE

DEAR MOM:

Well the Elks is come to town and they own it just like I said they would. My it is wonderful to see so many fine redblooded gentlemen on the streets all looking like their pockets couldn't hold their money. For the manicure business it is heaven there just ain't enough lady operators to go round a couple of gents is waiting their turn at each chair and a girl can have all the dinners and other dates she can take care of. But I have turned them all down their complimerits don't go with me at all because of this work that I have got to do with Mr. Edgerton that is so very important as you will understand. It seems hard to believe that such a chanced could happen to a girl out of the gas-house district of Camden New Jersey but it really is true, and Mr. Edgerton says I can do just as much guiding the destinies of the American people as I want to.

I suppose you read the great address which the Spokesman delivered to the Elks' convention and you seen every word I had said to Mr. Edgerton for the Spokesman to say. Of course Mr. Edgerton fixed it up again so that it sounded fine and Elkoquent—he keeps calling it that, it is a sort of joke on account of having been said to the Elks. It sure did thrill me to read it and I was more prouder than ever to live in such a rich country with so much wonderful prosperity all around me.

I must a say there is times when I wish I could have just a little more of it for myself. It is kind of hard on a girl that has been brought up right and is trying to earn everything not just her clothes. Right now I have got to put another darn in my best pair of skin-colored stockings and it will be very disfiguring right where the gentlemen look at them most. But I could not keep my landlady waiting no longer, and I have cut down on my meals all I dare I can't afford to be too starved when I go out with Mr. Edgerton because it ain't refined to hog your dinner.

" Well Mom this noon going out for my lunch I run into what I think is his wife—anyhow I hope it is because I would be sorry to think there was a third lady in this case. She was in a car with him, one of these kind that is called coops like glass show cases rolling round on big rubber tires. They had just drawed up by the curb and she was getting out.

I have told him that I will play the game so of course I didn't give no sign that I had ever saw him before. But I got a good look at her and she is sure something elegant you can bet there ain't any holes in her silk stockings nor in the squirrel-skin coat that she had on. She is a large soft lady and they went into an office building so I guess he was taking her to another of them fancy-priced specialists to see if they can find that angina pectoris. I went off thinking what would of happened to me if I would of took the notion that I had the angina pectoris. Would all them specialists be hunting it or would I just come home and get Pop to show me the trap-door where you crawl into the gas-tank? But I realize that I can't have everything in this world—I can't have electric coops and squirrel-skin coats and at the same time know the great heart of the plain people and be able to teach the Spokesman how to talk to them.

P. S. Well I had another call from Mr. Edgerton and we went out to dinner again and it is his wife like I guessed and he says the corn specialists says it is not angina pectoris of the toe, but only her tight slippers. And he started to apologize because he didn't speak to me but I told him to quit his kidding and let us talk about international affairs. So we went to another restaurant it was a cheap hash-house this time where you get a coarse dinner for sixty cents and Mr. Edgerton apologized for it but it was the only kind of a place where he would be sure not to meet no friends. We had a little booth where we could sit and talk and Mr. Edgerton tipped the waiter some and we sat there a couple of hours and he brought us some coffee a couple of times and something else that was supposed to be coffee because it was in coffee-cups but seeing ain't always believing.

Well the international situation is like this just now. All them Dago nations over in Europe wanted a lot of money from us so they could buy the guns and things while they was canning Kayser Bill. They come over here and borrowed billions and billions of dollars and now of course the Kayser is chopping firewood in Holland and we got the

job of collecting the money and we don't know how to start. They are an unprincipled lot these fellers in Europe says Mr. Edgerton.

"Yes, I know," I says. "I read all about them. The papers call them Bolshivikis."

"No," says Mr. Edgerton, "I don't mean that crowd they are revolutionists and they say they won't pay. What I mean are the French and Eyetalians and Poles and all them—they say they're willing to pay of course but then they don't."

"But then," says I, "what is the difference whether you say you will or say you won't if you don't?"

"Oh, there's a lot of difference," he explains. "If you say you will then you're recognized."

"What difference does that make?" I says.

"If you are recognized," says he, "then you can borrow as much more as you want."

"My God," I says, "I wished somebody would recognize me!" And then I felt kind of mean, for fear he'd think I meant about him not recognizing me on the street!

He goes on to tell me that the Spokesman is worried all the time about these debts He lies awake at night and thinks about them it's the only question He can't seem to leave alone to settle itself. The reason for that is because He was born and raised in that cold and rocky state—by the way I made a mistake because I said the name of that state was Florida but I was a dumb-bell because Florida is another place. I know now because today there was a feller come in to try to sell us some lots there it seems there is a boom and he had some extra-fine land-front lots that could be had this week only; he explained that they are called land-front lots because they are in the bay but they front on the land and they will be on the land when the bottom of the bay has been moved underneath them.

But the Spokesman was raised in a state that is rocky and cold, I have forget it again but I think maybe it is North Carolina because it is far up North. And you see the worst a man can do in that state is not to pay his debts and collecting debts is the one thing that the Spokesman can be sure of knowing how, He has done it all His life. But He never had so big a debt to collect in his home state in fact Mr. Edgerton says there has never been such a big debt in the world. He says that the Statesman has nightmares about it and imagines that the debt has broke loose and is rolling down over Him like it was one of them mountains of

North Carolina. He wakes up all in a sweat and He sends for Mr. Edgerton in a hurry and insists He has got to know how He can collect more money than there is in the world.

That sounds like a joke but it's really so because it is supposed to be paid in gold and it is twiced as much gold as there is. Mr. Edgerton says there is a professor in Germany that is trying to find out how to make more but he has not got it paying yet and besides they couldn't get it away from the professor without another war and that would mean we would have to lend more money again. But something has got to be done, else the Spokesman won't ever be able to get a good night's sleep, and it is undermining His health something fierce.

So you see Mom there was another job loaded onto my poor shoulders that was never trained to carry such loads. But I told you I was going to see it through and I sat there and thought real hard and I says, "Them Dagoes got goods from us with that money, didn't they?" And he says they did, so I says, "Then the way to pay the debts is for them to send us back some goods, whatever kind they can make that we need."

But he says, "No, Miss Riggs that would never do at all," he says, "and the reason is that we have got factories over here to make all the goods for ourselves."

"Well," says I, "but we can have twiced as many goods."

"No," he says, "our people haven't got the money to buy so much, and so it would shut our factories down, and all our people that works in the factories would starve."

Well Mom it shows you how dumb and ignorant us poor working people is I would never of thought of that would you? But it is plain as day—why we have even got what is called tariff laws to tax the things that is brought into the country so as to keep them Dagoes from dumping their cheap goods off on us and putting all our working people out of their jobs.

I seen then why the Spokesman was so unhappy because if we couldn't take money and we couldn't take goods what could we do about the debts? If they wasn't paid at all you can see what a bad example it would be for nobody would want to play the business game at all if they would never get paid their money if they made too much.

Well I must say I was scared because if all these greatest minds in the world hadn't been able to guess the answer what chanced was there for poor little Mamie Riggs of the Elite Beauty Parlors? But I thought and thought and Mr.

Edgerton set and watched me with an anxious look knowing how much there was at stake. And at last—will you believe it Mom?—I got it! Yes I did and all the world is going to know it in a day or two. That is, of course they aint going to know that I got it but they will be told the answer by the Spokesman in the big white house where He lives and tells them answers.

Says I, "Mr. Edgerton, them Dagoes has got a lot of pictures and cathedrals and things over there ain't they?"

"Yes," he says, "they have that."

"And people travel over there to see them all the time dont they?"

"Oh yes."

"And it's what they call culture?"

"Yes of course the very fanciest there is."

"Well," I says, "there's nothing in the world too good for us so let's us go over there and get their culture in exchange for the debts. We can build a lot of fine steamships, and send a million or two of our people over, and the Dagoes can put them up at good hotels and feed them and wait on them and show them round and explain things to them. And for them that don't care for art and high-brow things, there'll be girl-shows and stuff that will surely be better than paying bootleggers for what they give us in these here coffee-cups."

Well Mom that broke up our party. Mr. Edgerton was so excited that he got up and rushed right off to tell the Spokesman. He left me to walk home alone in the cold and it was only then that I begun to think about one thing I had forgot and that is who is to get the chanced to collect them debts in Europe? I would sure like a trip to Paris myself and I know my folks could stand a lot more culture than they'll ever pick up in the gas-house district of Camden New Jersey. But I guess Mom we had better not be greedy I've a notion it will be with the trips to Europe like it is with the electric coops and the squirrel-skin coats—the people that gets them will be them that has already got more than they can use.

Your dutiful

MAME.

LETTER V

IN WHICH I LISTEN TO GOSSIP

DEAR MOM:

Well, I have had my first failure in my new job of telling the Spokesman what to say to the American people. I went

out to-day and bought the afternoon paper and He hadn't said a word of what I had told Mr. Edgerton to tell Him to say. He had talked about the money them Dago nations owes us but all He said was that the debts was a sacred obligation and the American people would exact a settlement. But Mom you can see that aint saying nothing when there aint enough money in the whole world to pay them and we couldn't let them send us goods without ruining all our industries. How can they pay except like I said by our sending over tourists for them to feed? I am greatly disappointed in the Spokesman.

Tell Pop I got his letter and I thank him for all the ideas on politics he has sent. Some of them seems to me very good and I shall be pleased to make use of them. Mr. Edgerton says it is the opinions of the plain people that he wants, and I am sure Pop is plain enough to suit anybody. Tell him that I don't wonder he can't hardly believe this good fortune that is come to me. But it is God's truth just as I have wrote it.

And you can tell Pop he dont need to worry about his baby girl, because I am taking the best of care of myself. Mr. Edgerton aint tried to get fresh and I dont think he is that sort at all. He never says nothing about how I have such nice long brown lashes over my china-blue eyes. I dont think he even saw that darn I had put in my stocking though I forgot and put my foot up on a chair right where he could see. The truth is I think he loves his wife; only he dont know quite what to make of her just now and he's lonesome for a little female cheerfulness. If he buys me a dinner it aint going to break him and he's getting his money's worth and more being educated about how the plain people feels about politics and international affairs. And besides, Mom, dont forget that I have got a feller by the name of Walter that I am someday going to marry even if he is only a poor shipping-clerk in Camden and that ought to be enough for my Pop to fret over.

P. S. Well, I have just got home from another dinner and Mr. Edgerton has told me how I come to lose out with the Spokesman. He wouldnt have nothing to do with my ideas for the debt settlement because He says it aint a way to collect the money but only to spend it and the Spokesman dont believe in spending no money that you dont have to. He says most of the plain people dont care nothing about art and they wouldnt approve of people gadding about

Europe and as for drinking their wines the Spokesman jumps a yard any time anybody tries to get him to say anything about prohibition one way or the other excepting only that laws is laws and all good Americans should obey them.

Mr. Edgerton says that if I am going to be useful to him I have got to learn the rules of this game and one of them is that the Spokesman will never take sides in no dispute. It is His business to be popular and you can never get Him to say nothing that is going to get a lot of people down on Him. Ever since He has been in politics which is since he was a boy He has spent all his time dodging the tricks of people that was trying to get Him to put His foot into something and He has got to be the most cautious Side-stepper they have ever had in the game.

Well Mom we got to gossiping about how things is there in the great white house where the Spokesman lives and gee it is comical it is so much like the Elite Beauty Parlors with everybody watching everybody else and pulling and hauling and intreeging against them. The Spokesman you see is just like a King; and all of the courtiers wants to keep his favor and if He gives three minutes more of His time to one of them the other one retires into the corner and has a fit of the weeps or else he goes off and tries to find something bad about the first one, that he can have his great aunt whisper to the Spokesman's second cousin.

Mr. Edgerton says that this great man got into office by a fluke because he wasnt never meant to get in but only to be Vice-Spokesman to keep him on the shelf. The Vice-Spokesman it seems dont have nothing to say or if he does nobody listens to him. But now He's got in, and He's brought a little bunch of people along that used to be his angels back in the State of North Carolina or wherever it is up in the icy North where he comes from. These are rich men that used to pay the fare of this Spokesman when he was a little Feller, and was a sort of Office-boy for them in politics, to run the state like they wanted it.

But now He is got to be the greatest Man in the whole world and gee they cant quite bring themselves to believe it and they dont know quite how to take it. They cant get used to the idea of taking orders from what used to be their Office-boy and the Spokesman He cant get used to giving no orders because of course He always feels respectful to these gentlemen because they have got so much money and always have paid His way. And at the same time they are scared to death for fear He might get the

big head and take the notion to be the Boss. And each of them hates all the others like poison because each of them is trying to shove the others away from the Spokesman's elbow.

So that is how it goes, and Mr. Edgerton says I am not to get discouraged if I don't always have my way about what the Spokesman says. I can be sure that I will win out in the end because I represent the plain people and they have got the votes and everybody knows they are the real boss. And Mr. Edgerton says that just now what the Spokesman is worried about is what to do about the Reds that seem to be making an awful lot of fuss and what would I think he had ought to tell the world about it?

And gee Mom you can imagine how fine that was because it was one of the things that Pop has wrote to me about. So I says, "Them fellers had everyone ought to be sent to jail."

"Yes," says Mr. Edgerton, "but the trouble is that don't seem to work out right because then they have a trial and it puts their ideas on the front page of the papers instead of the ideas of the Spokesman. It's kind of provoking but it works just the opposite of how it had ought to."

"Well," says I, "This much is plain if them fellers don't like the way this country is run they had ought to get out of it."

"Yes," says Mr. Edgerton, "I have said that and we sent a couple of hundred of them off to Roossia a few years ago. But you see there is an awful lot of them and you've no idea what it costs or how it hurts the Spokesman to have to pay travelling expenses for a lot of Bolsheviks."

"Well," says I, "if I had my way I'd cut their journey short they should be sent to sea in ships of stone with sails of lead."

Mom you must tell Pop not to send me no old ones because that sounded fine to me but it seems that it is a wheeze in fact Mr. Edgerton was the man that had wrote it several years back he explained. "You see," he said, "before I come to the Spokesman I was shirt-stuffer for a big admiral and that was the sentence that made his reputation."

"A shirt-stuffer?" says I.

Says he, "That is what we call ourselves us fellows that make the big stuffed shirts that the public admires." It didn't seem to me that was a very respectful way to talk about an admiral but I didn't say nothing because I was trying to remember the rest of what Pop had wrote.

"Mr. Edgerton," I says, "I wish you would tell me how anybody that has got sense enough to make a speech can be such a fool as to believe in dividing up because can't they see that if you was to do it it wouldnt be a week before the smart ones like you and me would have it all again?"

"Well," he says, "the fact is that a lot of these Reds dont want to divide up their idea is just the opposite they want to concentrate the ownership and have the government run things."

"Yes," I says, "and wouldnt that be great?" I says. "Imagine the Elite Beauty Parlors being run by the government and all us girls setting with our feet up on the top of the tables instead of doing our work!"

"Well," says he, "as a matter of fact wouldnt there be a lot of customers come in to see that sight?"

But the subject is too serious for kidding so I says, "How much liberty would us girls have left, if we all had to be government help? And who would give us our jobs would we have to go to some politician from North Carolina that has got the Spokesman's ear? No, Mr. Edgerton, the prosperity of this country is based on individual effort and freedom of everybody to make his own way in the world. Just compare our wealth with what they have got over in them bureaucratic and Socialistic lands overseas."

Mom, that was an awful mouthful, but I had learned it word for word out of Pop's letter, I got it off without a slip and Mr. Edgerton was very much impressed he stopped joking and sat and thought it over and he says, "Yes, Miss Riggs, I am inclined to think that is sound doctrine and a good illustration. I think that will serve admirably for the talk which the Spokesman is to give to the reporters in the morning. They have asked Him several embarrassing questions about the big banker in his cabinet who has been let off a lot of his income taxes, and these ideas of yours I am sure He will consider much more suitable for public discussion. I think I had better run over and see Him at once and make the suggestion."

So then we gets up to go and then oh Mom a most dreadful embarrassing thing happens. Mr. Edgerton goes for to pay the bill for our dinner and the coffee and the other things in coffee cups that we has had and he takes out his leather wallet and finds that the least he has is a hundred dollar bill. He takes it out and gee it most burns my eyesight it is more money than I ever seen all at once in my whole life before—just a little bit more than I earn in a

month only I get it by the week and it has started to go before it comes. Well the waiter looks at it and says something about not thinking they'd have change for that at the desk and Mr. Edgerton says to me, "Do you happen to have a smaller bill with you Miss Riggs?"

And gee there I am knowing that I have got just exactly seventeen cents in my purse! So I have to think quick and I says that I dont think I have anything smaller than a ten-spot myself. And then the boob waiter busts in and says they wont have no trouble in changing that at the desk! So then I have to open my purse and play the game of being very much surprised that I have left my ten-spot at home and of course I am turned red all the way down into my blouse because how will Mr. Edgerton have any respect for my opinions about world finance if he knows that I have to go round the day before payday with only a few coppers to buy my lunch with?

Your worried

MAME.

LETTER VI

IN WHICH I PUT ON THE GLAD RAGS

DEAR MOM:

Well I am glad the family finds my letters interesting these things is sure different from anything that ever happened to me before and I guess to any girl from Camden New Jersey.

Well, I am having a funny time right now in the Elite Beauty Parlors. The girls is just ate up with curiosity they know I have got some big fellow on my string somebody seen me with him somewhere and they cant make out why I wont tell. They say I'm a boob to think I can hide him they will sure track him down but I just laugh at them. There is an extension phone in Madame Lafferty's private office and whenever I am asked to the phone she is always listening in but all she hears is that a gentleman named Mr. Brown says for me to meet him at the usual place and that dont tell her much. Sometimes I write these little notes to you in between customers, and of course that intreegs the girls a lot too and Ada Huggins—her that has changed her name to Adaire the silly fool—she says, "What is it Mame are you writing your mamewars?" That is supposed to be smart but it aint so very.

Well just now the phone rung and it was Mr. Edgerton, and he asked me if I could get off at five this afternoon and meet him and of course that wasnt easy because it is our busiest hour but he said it was a very urgent matter so I said I would try my best to be there. And then I went to ask the Madame and gee she was sour she says, "What is this that I am running a beauty parlor or a date ranch?" You see she pretends the girls aint supposed to meet the customers outside but gee what a howl there would be if I was to ask for enough wages to buy my own dinners! And we all know she goes out herself and meets a gent with a glass in one eye and his hair plastered over his bald head, he calls himself Count Skrimsky but I'm telling you he's no count in any way you mean it. Well I says she can dock my pay or I'll stay two hours of my afternoon off and then she tries to find out who is the gentleman and I tell her it is a government matter and I have been forbid to say and you can imagine how much pleased that makes her!

P. S. Oh Mom I have just had the most wonderful adventure that ever happened to a girl. Mr. Edgerton knew just what he had in mind when he got me to meet him at five o'clock it was to get to some store before it shut up! Oh Mom he must of saw that my purse was empty the last time we went out and he must of got sorry about it. Anyhow we strolled down the street and there was the Bon Ton Store with all the lovely things in the windows and he kind of led me over to look and he says, "They make lots of pretty things now-a-days dont they." And I says, "Yes, they do," but kind of feeble because I wouldnt have him think I was thinking I would ever like to own such things. But he says, "Let's us go in and have a look at them."

So we went in and he went to the suit department and he says to the clerk, "My daughter finds the winters in Washington more severe than she expected and she wants to get something nice and warm," he says, just like that and gee I nearly faints at the nerve of him. But of course I have go to go through with it so I says, "Oh, no, Papa, not now!" but he says, "Yes, right now, I insist."

So the girl takes one look at him and starts to bringing out the expensive things and I gasps, "Oh, that will cost too much!" But he says, "You let me tend to this daughter," and so of course all I can do is to stand there. And so he gets me a tailored suit brown like I had on but oh what a difference there can be in clothes! It is soft and fuzzy and

warm like it was an overcoat and yet it is lighter than my old suit!

And then he says, "We shall have to have a hat and things to match this suit," and then I starts to argue that my old hat will do but he says it wont and before I get through he takes me round to the shoe department and the glove counter—it is after the hours and the place is closed and the clerks is tired and looking cross but he cheers them up with a tip and so we finish the rounds. And I keep them all on and when I am going out you would not know it is the same girl that come in. The clerk wants to know where they shall send the old things and I don't dare to give the address because you see it had ought to be the name of some swell hotel so I says I am moving and I will send for them; and of course I will send myself tomorrow.

Well, Mom, I am so rattled I can hardly talk and I says, "Mr. Edgerton, this aint right I hadnt ought to of let you do it." But he says real serious that the ideas I have give him is worth what he has paid and there wasnt no other way he could of got them. "But I didnt expect to be paid for them," I says and he says, "Well I am paid for them myself and why should you work for nothing?" he says. "I have got to keep close to the great heart of the plain people," he says, "and to know how they feel and talk and how else am I to do it? The only thing you got to be sure is that getting fixed up swell dont spoil you so that you forget how the plain people feel."

But I says, "No you dont need to worry about that," I says, "because I got my mother and father and my kid brothers and sisters back in the gas-house district of Camden New Jersey and how could I forget how they feel?"

"Well then," says he, "it's all right and you can go on telling me and I will tell it to the Spokesman and He will tell it to the newspaper reporters and they will tell it to the papers and the papers will tell it to the gas house district of Camden New Jersey."

"But," says I, "What will the missus think about it your spending so much money on a manicure girl?"

"She aint going to know about it," he says. "I have paid cash and I dont suppose you will tell her."

"Trust me!" I says. "But some of your friends—"

"If my friends was to see me with you now it would be easier for me to get away with it I could say you was the daughter of some famous diplomat or of a senator at the very least." And of course that made me feel happy and

just then we come to a movie parlor and he says, "We have got to learn how to wear our good clothes," he says, "so let's go in and see the latest thing in Hollywood manners."

So in we go and there is a picture oh Mom the loveliest story about a poor miners' daughter in the hills that is kidnapped by a moonshiner that is an old-fashioned name for a boot-legger and she is rescued by the handsome young son of the mine-owner that happens to be visiting the mine and he comes to love her in the end and they get married in the loveliest palace all white with sunshine and roses. And if I had of saw that yesterday I would of said it was too good to be true but now it all seemed like it was me and I felt such thrills running over me and I felt so warm and I whispered to Mr. Edgerton to thank him several times and I felt just like he really was my father like he said.

But then I got scared because of course he aint my father but he's a man that aint happy with his wife and I am a girl that is promised to be married some day a long ways off to a poor but honest shipping-clerk in Camden New Jersey. And so I have got to keep telling myself that my job with Mr. Edgerton is to educate him so that he can educate the Spokesman that is the greatest Man in the whole world and has the job of educating the greatest people in the whole world.

But oh Mom it is hard to be a girl and to be young and to love pretty things and never to be able to have none unless you go without your lunch every day for a month or two. I go up to that little box of a room that I live in, and fry myself a frankfurter or some hamburger on a tiny oil stove and gee I get sorry for myself and I get sorry for poor Walter that thinks I am going to marry him some day and I am of course but oh Mom us plain people do have to pay a lot for what we learn!

Well we went into a restaurant and as soon as Mr Edgerton had ordered some dinner I says real determined, "We have got to get down to business now because I will not feel happy unless I give you some real good ideas to pay for all this money you have spent." So he says that the Spokesman likes my ideas about the Reds and how to hold them down, but He thinks that just now it would be better not to hammer them too hard because this country has got a lot of machinery and things that it has got to sell and them Bolshivikis has got a lot of gold and crown jewels that they want to exchange for ten thousand tractors that is made by

a friend of the Spokesman that helped him a lot to get elected.

"Gee," I says, "I thought them Roossian fellers had got all them gold and jewels by stealing them!"

And Mr. Edgerton says that is so and perhaps we hadnt ought to take it but the trouble is if we dont sell the tractors the tractor factory will have to shut down and that will leave a lot of good honest American working people to starve in the middle of the winter. "And so you see," says he, "how complicated these here international affairs is."

And I says, "My God I hardly know how to think my way around in such a mix-up. That is almost worse than the problem about getting the debts paid," I says, "for I was going to say that to make up with them Bolshivikis would be like shaking hands with murder." And Mr. Edgerton says, "Yes, it was Lord George that said that a few years ago over in England." And gee Mom you have sure got to keep Pop from sending me old ones else I'll have to stop using his ideas and think them all up for myself.

Well I done the best I could in a hurry. He said the Spokesman was very unhappy because of the way the prohibitionists was fussing because the boot-leggers wasnt stopped the dries didnt like it because the job of enforcing the law was left to that banker that is in the cabinet—I never can remember his name but I keep thinking of Cantelope though that dont sound right. Well anyhow this Mr. Cantelope is the biggest manufacturer of whiskey in the country and the prohibitionists dont seem to think that he is the best one to catch the bootleggers and I says, "Well, you have heard the old saying about setting a thief to catch a thief." And Mr. Edgerton thought that was clever but he didnt think it was just the way the Spokesman would want to defend His friend the great banker in the cabinet.

And so there it was Mom I couldnt think of nothing else so I have fell down complete and Mr. Edgerton will think that getting these new clothes has made me stop being able to feel with the plain people. So please ask Pop to see if he can think of any reason why a great whisky-maker should be hired by the government to stop the whisky-business, and if he can, to write it to me quick. But please dont let him send nothing that he has read in the papers about it because Mr. Edgerton is sure to say that is old stuff.

P. S. Again I been thinking it over and this idea has hit me that maybe Pop aint really got any ideas at all except

what he gets out of the papers and if so I have got to do this job all alone. I am going to talk it over with the girls in the beauty parlor because I am sure they dont read nothing in the papers except the divorces and the crimes and the beauty hints the same as what I done before I was invited to help the Spokesman with his speeches.

Your anxious

MAME.

LETTER VII

IN WHICH I AM PAID COMPLIMENTS

DEAR MOM :

You should of been in the Elite Beauty Parlors this a. m. to see what happened when I walked in with my new costume. I have got to wear it to work you see because I never know when Mr. Edgerton will give me a ring on the phone. You would of thought the girls had never seen no real swell clothes in their lives before they just let out one yell, and then of course they wanted the whole story when and where and how and especially how much. And when I wouldnt tell then I was a cat and Hattie Schoenstein—she has had a mad on me ever since I told her that the French way of her name would be Hotaire—well she says, "How much did you pay the gentleman for that?"

I says, "I paid him some valuable ideas," and of course they all thought that was the funniest joke they ever heard for how could the poor sillies imagine that I was being consulted about what the greatest Man in the whole world was to say twiced a week to the newspaper reporters of the whole world? If I had of told them that they would of busted with laughing.

But say Mom it is sure wonderful to be dressed right up to the minute you may say what you please but there aint any feeling like it. Already today three gentlemen have asked me will I go out to dinner with them and I have had to tell them that I have a steady which is the easiest way of getting out of it as I have to be here whenever Mr. Edgerton needs me.

Well I have got the afternoon paper, and I see the Spokesman has not said what I advised Him to say about the Reds. What He did say was so much wiser I could never of thought of it myself and it made me have a great reverence for Him. He says that the Roossians should be allowed to buy

our tractors because we have got to preserve freedom of trade because that is the great principle upon which American prosperity is based. And of course I can see that for if I had of went into that Bon Ton Store with Mr. Edgerton and the clerk had of told me that they wouldnt sell me no suit because maybe they didnt like the looks of me or something why where would I of been then? And so the Spokesman said we would not stop the people that come over here from Roossia to buy things but only them that had come to teach us ideas that was dangerous.

I will tell you something funny that will show you what a wonderful thing it is that the Spokesman is doing in educating all the people in ideas that is safe. I got some of the girls to talking about international affairs this morning because you see I want to find out what it is that the plain people think so that I can tell Mr. Edgerton and he can tell the Spokesman. I asked them about this business about letting the Roossians come over here to buy things and they all got mad and they says no we don't want none of them dirty Bolshivikis over here they has went and nationalized all the women in Roossia and we dont want none of that in America.

"Then you dont believe in freedom of trade?" I says and Florabelle McGinnis she flares up, "I believe in every girl having a right to choose her own feller," she says, "and if that aint freedom of trade then what is?"

Well when I come home from lunch I had the paper with that interview that the Spokesman had give and I hands it to Florabelle and I says, "See here, the Spokesman has been talking about what you said." And so she read it and a little later I hears her talking with Ada Huggins and she says, "Well if them Roossians has got the money and its good money why let them come in I say and buy what they want because after all freedom of trade is the great principle upon which American prosperity is based." Just like that she said it Mom as if it was her own idea but she had just took it up because she seen it in the paper the poor silly. But you can see how very important it is that I should study these questions and get them right so that I can know what to tell Mr. Edgerton to tell the Spokesman to tell the Floradumbelles.

Another idea was in that interview and a very important and wise idea as I can see. The Spokesman says there is another great principle upon which American prosperity is based and that is freedom of opinion; everybody has got the

right to say what they think and so we will have a chance to find out what ideas is the best. I read that to some of the girls so as to see what they would say and Hotaire—she is always looking to say something different from me, so as to put me into a hole—she says, “Well, if he thinks that, why is he scared to let them Roossians come in and say their ideas?”

And did you ever hear anything so silly as that letting them Bolshivikis come in and shoot off their faces! “Well but why not?” she says persistent like.

I says, “Why you poor simp dont you know them fellers brings in a lot of money to try to tear down our government?”

“Well,” she says, “and can they do it?”

And I says, “No of course they cant do it.”

And then says she, “Then why do we have to be so scared of them?”

“Scared?” I says. “Who’s talking about being scared?”

“Well then,” she keeps on, “why not let them shoot their faces off?”

“But you simp,” I says, “them fellers would come in here and buy printing presses and stir up our foreign labor.”

And she says, “Well if their money is good to buy tractors why shouldnt it be good to buy presses?”

And so I gets hot under the collar and I says, “You talk like you was one of them Bolshivikis yourself,” I says, “and you had ought to be shut up and not allowed to talk no such rotten ideas.”

“Oh so that’s all you believe in free speech!” she says.

And just then the Madame comes along and she sees we are having a row and she gives a “Shush!” and looks a few daggers at us as she goes to welcome a customer. And that is the way it goes with we girls we are just supposed to sit here and shine people’s fingers and never open our mouths at all. We have got no more rights than if we was so many polishing machines and I tell you Mom I sometimes think it is more than I can stand. Some day when the Madame gets off one of her shushes at me I’m going to bust loose and tell her what I think of her and her ideas that she can dictate to free Americans the way we talk and the way we dress and the way we do our hair.

If that ever happens I’m telling you that Lafferty lady will get the jolt of her sweet life because I have been talking to the other girls and they all feel like I do and I’ll bet

if I was to give a little time to it I could get them all to stand together and win some rights for ourselves. Gee Mom if I could only get a few dollars ahead some time so that I could have a little nerve! But it's the same with all of we girls our last nickle is gone before the end of the week. We had ought to have somebody to stake us so that we could afford to strike and not be starved into giving up! But of course there aint anybody interested in helping poor working girls to get their rights.

P. S. Well I have just come back from having dinner with Mr. Edgerton. We went to a pretty swell place because he says I am looking so nice now that no other sort of place would do for me. And he says I dont never need to worry about what it costs because my ideas is worth it to him he has never saw the Spokesman so pleased as with the ideas I have give to Him lately; he says the Spokesman almost smiled He was so pleased and once He made a remark that He didnt have to make and that is something that does not happen once in a month.

Of course I wanted to know so I says, "What was the remark?"

And he says, "Why, he says, 'I went to church yesterday.' And Mr. Edgerton of course wanted to be polite so he says, 'Who preached?' And the Spokesman says, 'Dr. Wringum.' And Mr. Edgerton says, 'Was it a good sermon?' And the Spokesman says, 'Yes.' And Mr. Edgerton says, 'What did he preach about?' And the Spokesman says, 'Sin.' And Mr. Edgerton says, 'What did he say about it?' And the Spokesman says, 'He didnt approve of it.' And Mr. Edgerton says to me, 'That was the end of the conversation.'"

Mr. Edgerton laughed like he thought there was something funny about that but I didnt see nothing funny and I says, "Well, but that is right ain't it? You wouldnt of expected a preacher would of approved of sin?"

And then Mr. Edgerton looks at me like he was studying my face and he says, "It is wonderful how exactly your mind is like the Spokesman's." And of course that was a tremendous compliment and I felt all flustered and says, "Just how is that?" and he says, "You have a serious mind," he says. "You have never wasted your time on foolishness."

"No," I says, "that aint quite so but when it comes to serious things like teaching the whole American people

about sin," I says, "nobody would want to make a joke about that."

And he says, "There is some evil people that might, but you wouldn't, and that is why you understand the mind of the Spokesman and He almost always likes your ideas when I tell them to Him." So Mom you can imagine how near to Heaven I felt.

Well then we talked about what the Spokesman had said about freedom of trade and of speech and Mr. Edgerton says that one of them Bolshiviki fellers has just sent the Spokesman a telegram saying that since He has come to believe in free speech wont He please let out some of the fellers that is in jail for practicing it. So there it is you see just like I said to Hotaire, how dangerous them fellers is. I says something that Pop had wrote me, "Liberty dont mean license." But Mr. Edgerton says that is an old one too it seems that all Pop's ideas is old.

So I says right out of my own ideas I says, "Well I'll say this that if a government aint got the right to protect itself, then what is it for?" And Mr. Edgerton went up into the air again and he says that is one of the proofs that I have got a mind just like the Spokesman, I would sure see that in His answer to the Bolshiviki feller only of course He wont answer the feller.

Well there we was chatting away as happy as you please and having such a good dinner too when all of a sudden I notices there is a feller sitting at the next table all by himself and he dont seem to have a thing to do but listen to what we are saying. I gets him out of the corner of my eye and then I writes a note on the menu and shoves it over to Mr. Edgerton, "We are being listened to." So then he begins to talk about the unusual severe winter we have been having and by and by he gets a chance to look at the other feller who is attending to what is in his own plate real hard. And after that we dont talk no more international affairs.

Well when we get up to go we have hardly got out of the door before I see the other feller getting up and when we are walking down the street there he is following us. So we stop to look in a shop-window and I see him stop too and I says to Mr. Edgerton, "We are being shadowed. I must get on a street-car right quick and you get on another going the other way and we will see what happens."

So we shook hands and I run and caught a car going my way home and that is all I know about it for I didnt see the feller on my car. But oh Mom do you suppose that Mr.

Edgerton's wife can hear how he is taking out a manicurist to dinner? Or do you suppose it can be some of them Bolsheviks that is trying to undermine the government by keeping me from helping the Spokesman keep close to the great heart of the plain people?

Your scared

MAME.

LETTER VIII

IN WHICH I PEEK INTO A PALACE

DEAR MOM:

If you have got the same habit that I have got of reading everything in the papers that the Spokesman says you will see how many times He says the things I have said for Him to say. The last time was that about the government having the right to protect itself against fellows that wants to talk about over-throwing it. It come out in the papers just like I said it to Mr. Edgerton.

Yesterday there wasnt so much news only a story about how the Spokesman had been delayed for a full minute after He had got into His automobile by the Spokeslady having to coax Her dog to get in too. It made a sweet story for I like to think of Them having a pet that They love.

Today there is another story very interesting. It seems that the Spokesman has got to have exercise but He is too busy to go and get it so up there in the great white house where He stays they have set up an electric camelephant, that works by machinery and every morning He gets up on top of it and gives Him a nice ride and shakes Him up and starts everything inside Him. I think that is a wonderful idea but I should think it would be rather tiresome riding on a camelephant and not getting nowhere or any change of scenery like on a real camelephant. But I suppose the Spokesman would be too busy to look at the scenery anyhow, He has got to be thinking all the time about what He is going to say to the reporters when they come to listen to Him again.

There was a customer left a magazine in the Elite Beauty Parlors and in it I see a picture of the Spokesman. Of course it is not a picture of Him riding the camelephant but it just shows His face. But I cut it out and took it home and pasted it on a piece of cardboard and I have set it up on my bureau so that I can look at Him while I am

thinking up things that I can tell Mr. Edgerton to tell Him to say to the reporters. I wish that Mr. Edgerton had not told me one thing about Him that I find myself always thinking while I look at the picture that He is like a singed cat because He is better than He looks. Of course I know there is movie actors that is more sheiks but they have not got the great ideas of the Spokesman.

P. S. Well I have went to dinner with Mr. Edgerton again and it had to be a cheap place because of that scare that we got from seeing a man that we thought was following us. Mr. Edgerton says that he does not know any more about it because the man did not follow him on the street car. It might be that his wife is having him shadowed because she is jealous about him giving so much time to trying to understand the plain people. He says that she is now certain that a wart which she has got on her shoulder is turning into angina pectoris and when he tries to persuade her that it is not so she cries and becomes very excited and says that he no longer loves her and that she knows he is only waiting for her to die so that he can run off with some peroxide blonde. I asks him if that means me and he says that my guess about it is better than any man's.

The other thing that it might be he says some of his enemies might be having him watched so as to get something on him. I says, "Have you got enemies?" And he says, "Up there at the great white house I have not got anything else and neither has anybody else because everyone is hating everyone else and watching for a chance to lift his scalp off."

There is a dozen secretaries up there it seems but Mr. Edgerton is the special one indeed he is really not a secretary at all he is just that on the payroll but they dont pay him very much and the greater part of his pay comes to him on the side out of funds which is put up by business men that want to have the say about things. And what Mr. Edgerton is paid for is to be a kind of guardian to the Spokesman to tell Him what to say that He wouldn't know if He wasnt told. And of course Mr. Edgerton has got the right to come into the big white house at all hours of the day or night and it is not many that have got that right and them that have not got it are intreeging and trying to pull down they that have.

He said again that it is just like a palace with a king and his courtiers but as I was never in a palace I could

not tell. And he told me about the people he has to deal with up there in the big white house and of course I listened very eager not because I like to gossip but because I have got to understand about these people if I am going to be one that has got the job of teaching the Spokesman.

Mr. Edgerton says there is an old gentleman by the name of Mr. Prows that is a sort of granddaddy to the great Man. He owns a big department store back in the home town and it runs itself and all the old gentleman has got to do is to play around in the big white house and enjoy the thrills of power. People come to him that wants this and that and he listens and looks wise and says that he will see what can be done and he toddles round and ask questions of this and that and by and by he whispers into the Spokesman's ear that the welfare of the party depends upon Pete Whizzle being made deputy collector of customs at Skunk Center Montana and if the Spokesman does it then the old gentleman is proud and happy for a week.

And there is another guy that is a big mill-owner by the name of Senator Buttles and he has been the Spokesman's real boss and now is the political manager and he is supposed to run the machine and all the other politicians and the other senators. But he is a flop at the job because you see he is one of these hard-boiled guys that is used to running a factory and to say for things to be done just so and if you dont like it you can get the hell out of here. But the other senators aint used to the job being done that way they is mostly old guys of the sporting sort that buy their bootleg liquor right in the lobby and they dont like the Spokesman and His blue-nose cheese-paring crowd that He has brought along from the artic regions and there is war between them and Mr. Edgerton has to work hard to keep it from busting into the papers some day.

And Mr. Edgerton says the Spokesman is very worried about that story about the camelephant He thinks maybe the people will think it is not dignified for the greatest Man in the world to be riding on a camelephant in His pajamas in His bedroom. And I says, "Well I should of thought that is just where they would think He should ride," I says. "The undignified part would be if He was to ride a camelephant on the street in His pajamas." And Mr. Edgerton says that is quite true and I always think of things in just the right way and if I am sure that the plain people will see it that way the Spokesman will be less unhappy.

Mr. Edgerton says there is nothing in the whole world that

worries the Spokesman so much as being made fun of because He is very serious about His job and wants people to be serious about Him. And I says, "Of course He would have to be," I says, "for it is no joke to know that a hundred millions of people is waiting for you to teach them what to think and a Man that has got to talk to all the reporters of all the newspapers of the whole world has got a job that will keep Him looking serious."

"Well that is just what it does," says Mr. Edgerton and he says, "You feel quite sure that it wont hurt Him about the camelephant?"

I says, "Anybody that laughs about such a thing will be no good American," I says. "The plain people like I know back in the gas-house district of Camden New Jersey," I says, "will think that a Man that has to teach them and govern them and manage their international affairs should be a sober Man and a moral Man with no time for foolishness," I says. "I dont suppose He rides that camelephant for fun," I says.

And Mr. Edgerton says, "No it is for His liver."

And I says, "Exactly He has got to take care of His liver of course," I says. "And while He rides He will have His mind on the government and He will not let Himself be worried by no laughing jackasses along the roadside."

Mr. Edgerton says that when the Spokesman saw the story in print He was fearful peeved and could not talk about nothing else all day He demanded to know who had give that camelephant away to the reporters and He told Mr. Edgerton to go and find out. And Mr. Edgerton went first to Mr. Grandaddy Prows and the old gentleman said he was not at liberty to say but in strict confidence he had an idea that it was Senator Buttles that had give it out. And then Mr. Edgerton went to Senator Buttles and asked him who had give it out and Senator Buttles said that he was not at liberty to say but in strict confidence he had an idea that it was Mr. Prows that had give it out. And gee Mom would you think that a palace would be so much like the Elite Beauty Parlors?

Well Mom I could of listened all day to international affairs like this but I had got nervous about all this intreeging and I looks about and there at one of the tables is sitting the same feller that I seen at the table the other night trying to listen in on our talk. "Mr. Edgerton," I says, "we are being shadowed again." And after that he was so

uneasy that his mind was not on what I was saying. And he says, "When we go out you must let me put you into a taxi because it will not be so easy for him to follow you and I will go another way and lose him in the crowd," he says.

So he gives me money for the fare and we goes out and he puts me into a cab and away I go and pretty soon I look back and there is the lights of another car behind us and so I watches and that car follows us all the time so I tell my driver not to take me no farther but to let me out and I will save most of my fare. And when I get out I see that the other car stops too and waits to see where I am going and then it follows slow.

I says to myself, "I will block that little game," so I slips into a big hotel right quick. I can do that all right because I have got on my swell new clothes that Mr. Edgerton give me so I look like I belonged in one of them places. I goes into an elevator and slips off at the mezzanine floor and sits there a while in one of the soft plush seats and a gentleman comes along and spreads his feathers in front of me—you know they calls them places "Peacock Alley"—but I goes on staring straight in front of me and he sees that I am not his pea-hen and so he goes away. This is not the man that is following Mr. Edgerton and I you understand but just some feller that is intreeged by my swell new clothes.

I dont see any more of the one that was following us so I go out by another entrance and get home all right. But gee Mom we are really being spied on and I wonder how it is they can find us whether they have got the telephone wires tapped at the Elite Beauty Parlors or whether they have got one of the girls hired to tip them off to my dates. You never can tell when you are living in the great world and have the job of deciding what is to be taught to the whole American people. Gee Mom it is more thrilling than any movie that I ever was at!

Your excited

MAME.

LETTER IX

IN WHICH I DON'T GET WET

DEAR MOM:

Well, I suppose you have saw in the papers how they are making a lot of fun of the Spokesman because of the story that He has got a camelephant in His room, so that

He can get His exercise by riding on it every morning in His pajamas. It is like Mr. Edgerton said He was afraid it would be they are getting smart about it and not taking Him respectful like a great Man like Him had ought to be took.

This a. m. there was a girl in the Elite Beauty Parlors that had a paper and there was no customers so she was reading about it and then she begun telling it and they was all chuckling. It seems this smart aleck in the paper was saying that this camelephant went about the room with the Spokesman on the top of it and that it had got unruly and had bumped Him against the chandelier and the aleck said the camelephant was built so the electric contact was got through spurs and that you stopped it by pulling on a pair of rains and saying, "Ho!" And he said that why He had got a camelephant not a zebray was because a camelephant don't have to be watered more than onced in three weeks and also because it was the emblem of the dries and so on a lot of silly stuff that it is a shame to write about a great Man that has got the hard job of governing and teaching the whole country.

Well it made me hot to listen to them sillies giggling there and I says, "That is all a bunch of nonsense," I says, "that camelephant does not travel but it stays on one place and it goes when you press a button and the reason it is a camelephant not a zebray is got nothing to do with prohibition," I says, "but because it is ordered for His liver and the camelephant is a beast that has got a very bumpy gate and it shakes you a lot when you ride on him."

Well and of course that got the lot of them peeved and Ada Huggins the silly that wants me to call her Adaire only I won't fool with such nonsense she says, "What do you know about it?" And I says, "Never you mind what I know," I says, "but I know a lot more than you think I know." "Maybe you have been invited up to that big white house to visit Him," she says and I says, "Maybe I have been and maybe I will be I aint telling it to you."

Well of course that intreegs them a lot, for they have saw there is something mysterious in my life and they would give a day's pay to know but I dont say nothing because it is a state secret as Mr. Edgerton says and my power to educate him and the Spokesman would be gone if anybody knowed that I was doing it he says the newspapers would not respect the ideas that I give them if it was knowed that they come from a manicure girl in the Elite Beauty Parlors.

P. S. Well Mom I have saw Mr. Edgerton again and it is getting to be very exciting because there is sure some enemy that is shadowing us and trying to find out what we are doing. Mr. Edgerton says whenever he comes out of the big white house there is somebody following him but he managed to shook him off and we had another dinner in the Greek restaurant where they cook things with mutton suet and he told me all what is happening. And it seems that it is very dreadful because the papers all over the country is laughing about that camelephant and telling all kinds of silly things like that it makes an awful racket while it runs or that the Spokesman has got a secretary riding with him and dictates his male while he goes out for a camelephant gallop.

Mr. Edgerton says he give positive orders to the reporters of all the newspapers of the country that nothing more was to be sent out on that camelephant but it done no good because the editors was all telegraphing for more and even cabling from South Africa and China and if the editors didnt get no more they would make it up anyhow. And the Spokesman is so worried that He has not been able to think about governing the country for the past few days but only scolding about who let the camelephant out of the stable.

And at last it was found out who done it and it was Mr. Grandaddy Prows that done it and they had an awful scene and the old gentleman wept tears and he said that he hadn't meant no harm but he only thought that the plain people would want to know all about the homelife of their great Man and would like to read about His camelephant just as they liked to read about the Spokeslady's pet dog and how the family automobile had been held up a whole minute after the Spokesman had got into it while the Spokeslady was coaxing Her dog to get in.

And the Spokesman said it was not the same at all because when He was in the automobile with His wife and Her dog He had something more than His pajamas on, and so it was proper for the public to think about Him then. He said that Grandaddy Prows had proved himself without discretion and that his usefulness to the Spokesman was ended and the poor old gentleman went off with his heart broken and now it is announced that him and his wife is starting on a European tour that he is doing some highly secret diplomatical errands for the Spokesman.

And of course that is very sad and I am upset too because

Mr. Edgerton says he cannot get the Spokesman to think about international affairs at all no more. The reason for the worry he says is that the Spokesman got into this great office by accident and He knows that He is wearing shoes that is many times too big for Him and He is scared to death that some day the people may get onto the real size of His feet. And I says, "Oh that explains it then because I could not see why He was so afraid of being saw in His pajamas. Because after all I have saw lots of pictures of screen actors in their pajamas and I have thought they was lovely. And when you see the pictures of defendants and corespondents and other people in divorce actions they do not look so bad at all in pajamas," I says.

Well the big white house is a mean place to live right now Mr. Edgerton says with everybody in the dumps or scared and anybody can get rich quick that can find out a way to get the American people to talk about any other animal in the zoo but the camelephant. I says, "Mr. Edgerton, it's not that I want money," I says, "because I am willing to serve my country for the love of it and I think it had ought to be possible for the Spokesman to do His great work without being bothered," I says, "so let's you and me figure out a way to get the people to appreciate and love Him again."

So then he looks relieved because he has come to have great confidence in me because the training I got in the gas-house district of Camden New Jersey has been better for this job than what he got when he was in college. So he says, "All right Miss Riggs let us do it. What do you suggest?"

And I says, "Any good woman would of been able to of told you. The Spokesman has got virtues that the plain people love and what we have got to do is to pick out one of them and get the people to think about that."

"Which one do you suggest?"

"You say that His great love is for economy and you take it from me they may pay a lot of money to boot-leggers and jazz-bands but deep down in their hearts the American people aint forgot that the real way to make money is to save it."

"Yes I suppose so," he says but kind of half-hearted.

"Listen to me," I says. "It is coming on to be spring-time and every man in this country is worried because he knows he has got to pay a bill for his wife's new Easter hat. Now suppose you was to fix it that the Spokeslady

was not to buy no Easter hat and you give out to all the newspapers of the world a story that She is making over Her old hat for this season don't you know that would warm the heart of every man in the country?"

Well he thinks it over but then he says, "Miss Riggs what about all the women that want to have their new hats?"

"Take it from me," I says, "The woman is fretting because her husband is spending too much on his new spring suit so let there be another story that the Spokesman is getting only a very cheap spring suit say twenty-five dollars."

"No," he says, "that would be too cheap they would not believe that it would sound like a shipping-clerk or something."

"Well," says I, "it happens that back in Camden New Jersey I have got a fyansay that is a shipping-clerk and it is nothing to be ashamed of," I says. "But make it thirty-five or forty-five or fifty-five or sixty-five whatever seems right—"

"Sixty-five would be about right," he says. "And come to think of it Miss Riggs I shouldn't wonder if you have saved the day."

"Let us hope that it is not too late," I says.

"How do you mean too late?"

"I mean that He has not got His spring suit already and paid too much for it."

"But what harm would that do?"

"Well," I says, "but if it aint a true story it would be no good."

"That can be fixed up," he says. "If the Spokesman has got a suit that is not economical enough it can be for a present to His chef up there at the big white house or maybe for the captain of His yacht," he says. And then he rushes away right off because he thinks that if the Spokesman knows about this He may be able to get some sleep tonight which is something He needs even worse than exercise for His liver.

And so then I start out for home and gee Mom it is awful because it has started to rain. There I am with my new suit and my new hat and shoes and gloves and I haven't got my umbrella and besides it is busted and if I was to buy a new one I should not have no lunch for the rest of this week and the next. And so I stand in the doorway of the restaurant waiting for the rain to stop but it gets worse and I stand till my legs is ready to give away and the tears is running down my cheeks as bad as the rain

and gee Mom it is sure awful to be a poor girl and have only one chance to look decent in your whole life-time and then see you got to lose that chance.

Well I look around and standing under the awning of the next store who do you think I see—the feller that has been shadowing Mr Edgerton and me! And suddenly I gets red hot and I goes over to him and I says, "What are you following me round for?"

Well of course he is rattled and he stammers, "I aint been following you lady I am waiting for the rain to stop."

"You husky brute with an umbrella and rubber shoes on?" I says. "Go and tell that to the judge," I says. "What is it you want out of me?"

Of course he don't know what to say but suddenly I make a guess and I says, "Do you want to know where I live?" I says. "Are you trying to follow me home? If so," I says, "I'll make you a bargain you lend me them rubbers to put over my new shoes and you put that there umbrella over my new hat and dress and you can walk home with me as straight as the streets run."

And gee Mom he is tickled so that he busts out laughing. It seems that he is a good sport because he says "All right Miss if you really mean it I'll take you up." And he reaches down and takes off his rubbers.

But before I stoop to put them on I gives him a good look in the eye and I says, "Look here Mr. Man I want you to understand that I'm a lady and if you try to get fresh with me I'll poke you in the mug with your own umbrella," I says.

And he says, "Oh no ma'am it aint anything like that," he says. "I am a respectable married man and you are quite safe with me." And so he escorts me home and bids me good-night at the door as polite as if I was the daughter of an admiral or of some famous diplomat like Mr. Edgerton says that I look. And what it is that he's after well I suppose I'll know about it someday when it has happened.

Your uncertain daughter

MAME.

LETTER X

IN WHICH I TAKE A FLOP

DEAR MOM:

I have your letter and also Pop's and I dont wonder you both find it fearful exciting to get my letters telling how I have told Mr. Edgerton what to tell the Spokesman to say

to the American people and then that same day to get the newspaper and see that He has said exactly what I have said for Him to say. And just think Mom it is not only in the Camden Republican that you would read it but if you would of been in Philadelphia then you would of saw it in the Philadelphia Democrat and it would of been the same in Oshkosh or Lalipalousa wherever them places is.

Indeed Mr. Edgerton says it would be the same if you was to be in France or in Japan or any of them European countries because you see we have got more money than all of them put together and they all have to borrow from us and so they are all waiting round scared to see what we are doing and if the Spokesman has et too many pancakes for His breakfast and they have not agreed with Him then there is factories got to shut down in South America but if the Spokesman has just had a visit with a congressman from back in the hog-belt to tell Him that the hicks is happy over the increase in their bank mortgages why then the Spokesman perks up and oil promoters in the Faro Islands decides that it is all right to drill another well.

Yes it is a most wonderful thing to have happened to a poor manicure girl from the Elite Beauty Parlors and Mr. Edgerton is a good and true man and it is almost like what you might call a platonic friendship. It is extra wonderful right now because there was the greatest Man in the whole world miserable and not able to think about international affairs at all because all the papers was making fun of Him because He had got a camelephant to exercise His liver. And I was the one that fixed it up all right with my idea about the economy stories.

Of course you will of saw them by now. Mr. Edgerton and the Spokesman did not change a word of what I said. The Spokeslady is not to get no new Easter hat but is making Her old one over and the Spokesman Himself is getting one spring suit that is to cost Him only sixty-five dollars. I suppose that Mr. Edgerton and the Spokesman knows about what is the right price but it seems an awful lot of money to me I know that Pop never paid more than half that for a suit at least if he did he had the senst never to let you find it out. I think it is a little hard for great and rich folks like Mr. Edgerton and the Spokesman to remember how it is to be real poor. They have left that job to me and so I don't worry that my underwear is all darns and patches because it reminds me that I am keeping close to the heart of the plain people all the time.

Them stories was published only yesterday but already you can see that they have changed the whole tone of the papers. In the one I get there is a very respectful editorial, saying that it is a providential thing for the country in this age of jazz and flappers to have a great Leader that is a believer in the pioneer virtue of thrift. And Florabelle her that works next to me in the Elite Beauty Parlors she says, "Well, if the Spokeslady can stand it I suppose I can so I will save the price of a new hat and I can see fifteen or twenty shows with it," she says and so you can see what a great influence I am having even with the Floradumbelles.

P. S. Well Mom, I am very much puzzled for I have just got this afternoon's papers and there is another story about the Spokesman and the Spokeslady and it contradicts every word of the other story because it says now that the Spokeslady has got Herself three especially beautiful new Easter hats and far from getting along with only one sixty-five dollar suit of spring clothes the fact is that the Spokesman has just bought Himself a dozen suits of spring clothes that cost a hundred and twenty-five dollars each.

And it is a story that seems to be give out from the big white house just like all the other stories that Mr. Edgerton has had charge of and I don't see what it can mean because it will ruin everything I have done and what are the plain people going to think when they see one story one day and then exactly the opposite the next day they will stop believing anything they read in the papers and how will the Spokesman be able to instruct them in what they had ought to do?

I am terrible worried about it because what can I think except that some of them Bolshiviki fellers has got in their dirty work somewheres undermining American institutions and spoiling the work that I am doing for the Spokesman? I am on pins and needles waiting for Mr. Edgerton to call again and hope it will be soon. I am not allowed to call him because of course it would not do for him to be making dates with ladie's voices over the telephone at the big white house where the Spokesman speaks.

P. S. Again. Well it is another day and I have not heard from Mr. Edgerton and it is a shame there had surely ought to of been some way that I could get hold of him in a time of public danger like this. It seems to me like the Reds is running away with the country and I could not sleep

good all night I dreamed that I seen twelve Spokesmen all alike riding around on twelve electric camels and each one of Them had on a hundred and twenty-five dollar suit of clothes. And there is an editorial in the paper this morning saying that of course it is necessary for the Spokesman to be clad adequate to His high Station and of course He would not be stingy to His wife at this joyous Eastertide. And Floradumbelle says she guesses she will have to have her new hat after all and she will stick some gentleman friend for her movie tickets so you can see how the whole country is getting demoralized again.

P. S. Once More. Well Mr. Edgerton called up and I met him at the restaurant but he was scared to speak to me he is being shadowed all the time by these mysterious enemies. He signed for me to follow him and I seen that something was wrong so I followed and we dodged about a while till we was sure there was nobody following and then he went to a big art gallery and we sat there and talked. He said that was a private enough place because nobody that had to do with politics in Washington would ever go into no place like an art gallery.

Well I have found about the stories and what went wrong. He says that my economy stories was the awfulest flop that ever had went out from the great white house and it has put him in the awfulest hole and most ruined him with the Spokesman. He says it was not the Bolshivikis at all but it was the business men no sooner did they see that story in the papers than they run bear-headed and wild-eyed to the nearest telegraft office and in the first two hours they had a hundred and forty-seven telegrams of protest mostly from millinery manufacturers and associations of cloak and suit dealers and they all wanted to know whether the Spokesman had gone mad or was the Bolshivikis conspiring to get Him to ruin the retail trade of the country. Here the Spokesman had promised them prosperity and they had put up I forget how many millions to elect Him, and now He goes and gives them this jab in the solar plexus.

And Mr. Edgerton says it was something awful the panic in the big white house because the Spokesman had gone out for a walk with His four secret service men that is hired to pull Him out from under automobiles and they couldn't find Him and they begun telephoning to places on the way to look for Him and so there was a report that the Bolshivikis had blowed Him up and somebody called out all the

fire-engines in the city. But at last they got hold of Him and the contradiction was sent out quick but not before eleven manufacturers in the Eastern states alone had gone into bankruptcy and that is why they had to make it a dozen suits the Spokesman had bought in the hope to save the wholesale trade.

And Mr. Edgerton says that poor Mr. Grandaddy Prows sent a heart-broken cablegram from the ship that he is sailing on to Europe because he is sure that it is an effort to ruin the department-store business and to punish him because he let the camelephant out of the stable. And Senator Buttles is furious too because he makes linings for ladies hats in one of his mills but he is glad too because he hates Mr. Edgerton because he can't bear to have nobody but him telling the Spokesman what to say to the American people. But Mr. Edgerton says what would Senator Buttles know to say because he has got only one idea in the whole world and that is a ten percent reduction in the wages of his mill-hands.

Gee Mom it is terrible to be in a mix-up like this I had no idea that high life was so complicated and for the first time I am doubting whether I am big enough for my job. Just think of it to save the situation they have had to send out another story to say that the cost of keeping up the Spokesman's private yacht that is really a ship of the navy is two hundred thousand dollars a year and so everybody can see that He lives like a Gentleman of His high Station had ought to do.

Well I seen that Mr. Edgerton was so blue I hated to tell him any more troubles but I thought that he should know about how I had spoke to that feller that has been following us and how he had walked home with me. I said that some time the feller would of been bound to of found out where I lived and Mr. Edgerton said that was right. And he said that he would not give a whoop about it because the truth was he was sick of his job and anybody that wanted it could have it for the price of ten cents. And he would go and get a job with some big business where a feller could do what he pleased and not have somebody snoop-ing on him all the time. Of course I tried to cheer him up I told him how he must think about the plain people and he said something about the plain people that was not nice for a lady to hear and him sitting right in front of one of them Eytalian madonnas in the art-gallery too.

I went home very sad and lonely and without no dinner

and gee Mom what should I run into at home? Mrs. Budd that is my landlady must of been watching for me for she come running out and of course I was scared I wonder if I will ever get so that I do not jump when I see a landlady coming at me. But it wasn't to get her money this time but to tell me that there has been a lady here looking for me about a half an hour ago.

"A lady?" I says. "What sort of a lady?"

"A large soft lady," she says, "a real sure enough one a swell looker."

"And didn't she leave no name?"

"No," says Mrs. Budd, "she said she would come back again."

And suddenly something hits me and I says, "How was she dressed?" She says that she had on a long squirrel-skin coat that must of cost a thousand dollars and gee Mom it most floored me for of course it must be Mr. Edgerton's wife. And of course that is what that feller was following me home for and he has told her where I live and she has come after me. And gee I feel like I was Lydia Lovelight—do you remember how pathetic she was in "Passion's Prey?" But do you really suppose that crazy woman can be after me with a gun because she thinks that I have took her husband away from her? I says to myself, "Mamie Riggs you have wished that you could get to Hollywood and now its seems that Hollywood is come to you!" Well, if anything happens you will see it in the papers.

Your scared daughter

MAME.

LETTER XI

IN WHICH I PLAY A BIG SCENE

DEAR MOM:

Well I hate to be writing you blue letters and you having such a hard time what with the baby having the croup and Pop not sure of his job. Tell him I thank him for his fine ideas but the truth is just now I have not got no heart for the work I have been trying to do it seems to me like I had better just be a plain manicure girl like I used to be and not try to understand these great world affairs that is too much for my poor head.

The reason is because it don't seem to me like people was honest like I thought they was. When I told Mr. Edgerton

to have the Spokesman give out to the newspapers all them stories about Him and the Spokeslady being so economical and not buying no new clothes I thought They was really going to not do it and it was all going to be straight. But the way Mr. Edgerton talked They just didn't bother about the truth at all and it has made me sort of ashamed. If They are going to do things that way I just aint interested in helping Them at all because They are really not doing the plain people no good.

Of course I aint had no chance to ask Mr. Edgerton about it because he aint called me up again so I am just waiting. The girls in the Elite Beauty Parlors they seen I had something on my mind and Ada Huggins, she says, "What's the matter Mame you seem sort of deestraight." You see since she has changed her name to Adaire she is always trying to use French words and I do sure hate affected people.

I says, "I have got important matters to occupy my mind and I have not got no time for idle chatter," I says. And she says, "Well now will you listen to that, of all the airs! Who do you think you are the Spokesman up in the big white house?" "You are getting warm," I says but of course I didn't say no more because it is what Mr. Edgerton calls a state secret that I am helping him.

P. S. Well, I went home thinking about that mysterious lady that has been to call on me and that I am pretty sure is Mrs. Edgerton. And Mrs. Budd my landlady says she aint come again. She is awful curious about such a great lady coming to see a girl that has got the cheapest room in her house and she says, "Is it some lost aunt of yours dearie?" But I says, "It is just a friend I think."

She says, "You could talk to her in my parlor if you like." And of course I know that is just so that she can listen in but what can I do can I expect a visitor to climb four flights of stairs and where could I put her in this room that is only six by eight and I have to shove the oil stove and what is left of my dinner under the bed before I can get to the door. So I says, "Thank you very kindly." And she says, "I will call you if she comes and you can come down." I says, "Do please and keep her entertained while I am getting my curl-papers off."

You see I wanted to fix myself as decent as I could so as not to shame Mr. Edgerton too much for knowing me. So I wash my face and put my hair up to curl and I get my

supper of potato chips and pickles in a hurry and I am just in the middle of getting it down with my new dress I have took off all over the bed when I hear a step in the hall and there comes a knock on the door and I think of course it is Mrs. Budd and I says, "Come in," and the door opens and my God there she is!

Well Mom you could of knocked me over with an orange stick. I just stand there with half a dill pickle in my mouth and the other half in my hand and stare at her like a boob. It is the same lady that I seen getting out of the electric coop with Mr. Edgerton and she has got on the same squirrel-skin coat and all. She wouldn't have to be a very big lady to seem awful big standing in the doorway and she is red from climbing the stairs and there is red in her eyes too she gives me the glare and holds herself stiff and straight and gee Mom I feel like a worm must feel when it is going to be stepped on.

"Are you Miss Mamie Riggs?" she says and I gives a gulp at the pickle. "And so you are the woman that is going with my husband!" she says.

So then I see it is going to be a war and I thinks what kind? She has got me penned in a corner and there is just a window and no fire-escape and a long ways to the ground and she has got a big squirrel-skin muff that she holds in her left hand with her hand inside it and I thinks to myself there is your death Mamie Riggs because of course she must have a gun in that hand and gee Mom it sure makes your hair rise up to watch that muff and wonder what is going to happen will she let the muff fall and show the gun or will she shoot through the muff? But no she won't be apt to do that because she won't think no manicure girl worth spoiling a fine muff over. It is exactly like the big scene in a play you know how it is Mom only you really don't because it is another thing altogether when it is real.

Well I have got the pickle out of the way and so I say real careful like, "I have the honor to be a friend of Mr. Edgerton," I says. And then I have a sudden bright idea and I raise my voice and call, "Come in Mrs. Budd." Then I listen and I say again louder yet, "Please come in Mrs. Budd." For of course I know that she is not going to lose her chance to find out what is going on but will be at the door listening and sure enough the door opens kind of timid and I hear her voice behind the big lady, "Did you call me Miss Riggs?"

"You might come in," I says. "I have a lady caller she is

the wife of a gentleman friend of mine. Meet Mrs. Edgerton," I says, "Mrs. Budd."

And Mrs. Budd gives a courtsey that is not answered being that she is behind and aint saw and so I sweep my clothes into a heap and I says, "Come and sit on the bed," I says. And so of course Mrs. Edgerton has to let her get by and sit down and then I feel a little better because my landlady is between us and I think maybe if there should trouble start she might shove her hand up or rattle her and spoil her aim.

But I have made a bum guess from seeing too many movies I guess for it aint anything like that. All of a sudden the lady lets her muff drop and puts her two hands up to her face white kid gloves and all and busts into tears! And there she stands shaking and sobbing and says to herself, "Oh the shame of it, the shame of it!"

So then of course I remember that she is supposed to be a sick woman and what she is going through and I am sorry and I says, "Look here Mrs. Edgerton you have got this all wrong things between your husband and me aint at all what you think," I says.

So then she flares all hot again and drops her hands. "Do you mean to say you have not been going to dinners with my husband all the time?"

"It would be very silly of me to deny that," I says, "seeing that your detective has been sitting at the next table to us most of the times but what is the harm of dinners?"

"And him with a wife at home!" she says with the tears running down her cheeks again. "And the dinner on the table getting cold!"

"Well that is too bad," I says, "it was a shame to waste so many dinners but I didn't know about that Mrs. Edgerton," I says. "A gentleman asked me to dinner and being hungry why shouldn't I go?"

Well I see she is human after all and I am still more sorry so I goes on real friendly like. "I guess Mrs. Edgerton you have not knowed many working girls in your life," I says, "and you aint realized how it feels when a gentleman offers you a dinner free of charge. They pay me eighteen-fifty a week at the Elite Beauty Parlors and I have got to live on that till the next Saturday night and if I have not got anything left on Friday night I do not have any dinner," I says. "Mrs. Budd here will tell you that I have to give her six dollars a week that is what a girl has to pay to keep the rain off her in Washington D. C. And if I spend a dollar a day for my food then I have five dollars and a half

a week to dress myself like my profession requires and all the luxuries that you see in this room," I says kind of sarcastic," and for tooth-paste and what laundry I can't do in the bath-tub downstairs without Mrs. Budd finding it out and for music and books and art," I says, "and for doctor's bills if I should—" I am just about to say, "If I should take up the notion that I have got the angina pectoris of the toe," but I realize that would be nasty so I end kind of meek-like, "if I should be sick."

She is staring and has got a kind of agonized curiosity in her face like she would like to know what sort of terrible animal I am. The tears is still there so I says, "What is it you believe, Mrs. Edgerton? Do you think I have been paying the woman's price for my dinners?" I says. "Well it has been winter time and cold outside and where do you think I could of took him to? Would I bring him to this room?" I says. "If you think that just you ask Mrs. Budd here and she will show you down the stairs quick," I says. And of course Mrs. Budd gives a snort and I says, "Do you run that sort of a house Mrs. Budd?" And she says, "Not that I know of!"

So there is a little pause and the lady still weeping silent so I goes on, "Has that dick been telling you lies so as to keep his job lady? If he has told you the truth it is this that I have et maybe a dozen dinners at your husband's expense and I have walked a little ways on the street with him and sat once talking in an art-gallery and that is all. I have not even been into a taxi-cab with him and he left his own car at home for his wife or that is what he told me and if it aint true it is not my fault. And if it is the cost of the dinners that worries you it would of been easier to of saved all the money you must of paid to that there dick," I says. "It was mostly in cheap places that we et because he was scared he would be saw."

"And if you are so innocent why do you have to hide?" she cries.

"He said he had to Mrs. Edgerton and when a gentleman asks you to dinner at a cheap place you can't hint for a better place at least not if you are a lady. I shouldn't wonder if the reason was because he had a wife that he thought wasn't reasonable and wouldn't believe the truth if he told it to her."

"But why does my husband have to dine with a woman I do not meet?"

"You will not like it," I says, "if I tell you that you and

your lady friends can't give your husband what he has to have in his political life. But you had ought to see it because you would scorn to know the things that his job requires him to know."

"What things?"

"Things about the way the plain people of this country feel and what they want."

"A manicure girl!" she kind of snorts.

"There is a lot of us," I says, "and it aint only that we have got votes but we do a lot of talking and can be a political force if you get us real mad," I says. "And then there's Pop," I says, "a gas-house worker in Camden New Jersey and if anybody was to ask you what such a man would say about the League of Nations for instance would you have any idea what to answer? No Mrs. Edgerton you wouldn't but right there on my dressing table underneath the cold cream jar is a letter about it that I was intending to read to Mr. Edgerton the next time I meet him."

Well she looks me over some more and then she says in what is meant to be icy tones of voice, "Why could his wife not attend these political conferences?"

"Indeed she could so far as I am concerned Mrs. Edgerton I have never had a word to tell to your husband that you might not of listened in on."

So she thinks again and says, "It is a shame that there should be two dinners and one should wait and get cold," she says.

"Yes ma'am," I says. "I can see that is a waste."

But her next one floors me. "Will you come to dine at my home Miss Riggs?" she says real sweet.

So then I have to think in a hurry. "What is that Mrs. Edgerton?" I says. "Are you expecting to make a boob out of me?"

"You have political information to give my husband," she says, "and when a woman's husband is in political life it is the custom for her to give dinner-parties to help his career. I invite you to dine with us."

And so I gives a gulp like I had another pickle in my throat and I says, "Very well ma'am I will come."

"And when?" says she. "The sooner the better will you come tomorrow evening?"

"I have no other date," I says.

So she stoops down and picks up her muff and in it she has got not a pistol but a vanity case. Her fingers is trembling so that she can hardly open it but she does and

there is a gold pencil and a little note-book and she puts it against the wall and writes the address 2349 Alexander Hamilton Place Thursday at 7.30 and she hands it to me. "There it is and I hope you will not disappoint us."

"Mrs. Edgerton," I says, "you must understand I have not got no good clothes for such a party—"

"Pray," she says, "don't give a thought to that. This is to be an intellectual and political occasion and you may wear your street dress that my husband has bought you," she says, "and I will wear the same kind that he has bought me."

And so then she sweeps out and leaves Mrs. Budd and I to spend the rest of the night talking it over. And gee Mom when I thought about her I had made up my mind that I would count it a victory if I got off without a bullet in me and here now I have got another free dinner coming!

Your delighted

MAME.

LETTER XII.

IN WHICH I MISS HALF A DINNER

Dear Mom:

I have just got back from Mrs. Edgerton's party and I have sure got some news now.

How I did wished I could of had you here to advise with. The best guess I could make was that Mrs. Edgerton was figuring to show her husband the difference between a real lady and a manicure girl but Mrs. Budd she says "Maybe she really wants to know you because why," she says, "if a woman's husband is got to talk about politics with manicure girls any wife would rather it was where she could be around." But I think Mrs. Budd must of been impressed by that squirrel-skin coat for of course any landlady will trust you more if you have got a thing like that on.

Well anyhow I says that I am going there and do the best I know how and talk with Mr. Edgerton just the same as all the other times. Because after all the main thing is that he has got this great work to do to tell the Spokesman what to say to the whole American people. He has ast me to advise him and I am not going to let no jealous wife scare me off.

I have not got time to get home to fix myself up after work so I give myself a lick and a promise in the beauty

parlors and pile myself into a street car and get pretty much mussed up in the crowd and I ride until I get to Alexander Hamilton Place. But then it is too early and I have read in the etiquette book that it is not good form to arrive for dinners ahead of time so I take a little walk though I don't mind admitting to my dear old Mom that my knees is kind of weak for walking. But I am not scared in the head and I think up some good conversation and remember some ideas in Pop's letters and so I go back to the house.

It is one of these gosh-almighty swell apartment-houses made out of pink and green marble and red plush curtains and palm trees and colored boys with brass buttons. But I have got my new clothes and I am not going to worry even if Mrs. Edgerton does know that her husband bought them for me. I am announced by the telephone and I ride up in the elevator and there comes a maid with a white apron and a cap and I am took into a dressing room and then a room with a piano and some books and lights that is dim and mysterious.

Well I have had the hope that I might see Mr. Edgerton first so as to get a line on what is coming but she don't mean to give me no such advantage she comes sweeping in. "Good evening Miss Riggs," she says and I remember that the etiquette books says that some ladies shake hands and some do not and she is one of them that does not. She is very polite but a little too gushy and I says to myself right off Mamie Riggs she is worse scared than you are.

Well she starts to tell about the late winter we are having and of course I know as much about the weather as anybody and after we have finished with winter in Washington D. C. I tell her about winter in Camden New Jersey.

Then Mr. Edgerton comes in and he is the same old friend and we do shake hands and like we meant it and then I see that he is going to play the game like there wasn't nothing wrong. So I says, "Well Mr. Edgerton and how goes the economy program with the Spokesman?"

He says, "Well it is not going so good as it might because you know how it is with economy it is a fine word for the campaign but when you come to put it into practice you find that it means letting somebody out of a job and it always turns out to be the third cousin of some congressman or maybe of a district leader."

"Yes," I says, "some of them fellers that is setting with their feet up on their desks smoking long cigars."

"Exactly," he says, "and there is nothing that worries the

Spokesman so much as thinking about them fellers. You see how it is when it comes to election time they are all busy rustling out the vote for Him and after that He has got to find something for them to do."

Well I had thought I must be careful not to leave Mrs. Edgerton out of this conversation so I says, "A little while ago, Mrs. Edgerton I thought I understood about this here economy business but now I find it is complicated and there is something that Mr. Edgerton or maybe yourself might explain."

"And what is that?" she says.

"Well it is this business that you can never economize in nothing without turning somebody out of work. But it is a terrible thing for working people to be out of jobs," I says, "right now my Pop is scared that he may lose his job at the gas-works and him with a half a dozen kids growing up and why should them kids have to starve just because some people is took it into their heads to economize on gas-bills?"

"Perhaps we had better go in to the table," says Mrs. Edgerton and so there is the dining room and gee Mom if you could see how them people live they are surely making jobs for the poor. The table is all got a solid piece of glass over the whole top and there is a centre-piece that is hand-embroidered lace and you have got a hand-embroidered doily in front of your place and there is real silver and what I guess is cut-glass and there is little electric candles at each place and there is two sorts of wine glasses well Mom all I can say is that I am glad I have took your advice and studied the etiquette books and practiced them so that now I do not have to be rattled but can give my thoughts to being intellectual.

Well we have got started on some oyster cocktails and I says, "Have you thought up any way to undo them blunders of ours and get the people to liking the Spokesman again?" And he says, "No I have not."

And so I says, "I have been thinking hard about it and I have been looking at the pictures of the Spokesman that I see in the papers and it seems to me they are wrong. Have you ever thought about them?" "No," he says, "I can't say that I have what is it?"

And so I tell him, "They are all pictures that is took in regular clothes like a business Man with a white collar and one of them hundred and twenty-five dollars suits on. But the most of the people in this country don't look like a

fashion model," I says, "and they don't wear white collars except on Sunday and the Fourth of July. It seems to me they would be a lot more interested in listening to the Spokesman's advice about how to live their lives if they thought He lived the same kind of lives that they do."

So he sits very thoughtful and he says, "That might be a worthwhile idea," he says. "What would you suggest Miss Riggs?"

"Well," I says, "what was it that the Spokesman done when He was young back there in the State of North Carolina?"

"North Carolina?" says he. "You mean Vermont, don't you?"

"Well I can never keep them states straight," I says. "I knew it was up in the North somewhere, but what was it He done?"

"Well He was raised on a farm."

"All right then that is fine there is still lots of farmers in this country I guess. So why don't He go up there to the old homestead and get some pictures took while He is pitching the hay?"

"You are a little ahead of time," says Mr. Edgerton. "I am afraid they have still got snow on that homestead up there."

"Well then let Him go shovel the snow it will do just as good."

"He is hardly a husky enough Man for snow-shovelling," says Mr. Edgerton.

"That is all right," I says, "it don't take long to get a picture not even a movie," I says. "The point is that the plain people can see the Spokesman with His coat and collar off and looking like them. I know how it is with my own Pop if he was to see a picture of the Spokesman in a pair of blue overalls and a big wrench in His hand and it was headed the Spokesman mends His own gas pipe up there at the big white house why I know that Pop would vote for Him till the water-pipes bust in hell," I says.

And so then Mr. Edgerton is excited and he says he believes that is the solution of the problem the way for him to get back into favor and put Senator Buttles into the discard. And we go on talking about what is to be in these pictures I can't remember all we said but it was like that and I may be awful dumb but I honestly thought it was an intellectual conversation. But I have got so interested that I guess I must of forgot to bring Mrs. Edgerton in. Any-

how we have et some soup and we are eating some fish and I am talking hard when suddenly I hears the wife give a sniff and I looks and she is sitting very straight and her face is got bright and it seems she is hopping mad and all of a sudden up she hops with her napkin in her hand and cries, "Oh this is intolerable!"

Of course I stares and I says, "Why Mrs. Edgerton!"

She says, "You are making a fool of me both of you!"

I says bewildered like, "Why ma'am what do you mean?"

"You really expect me to believe such rubbish?" she cries.

"Well ma'am," I says. "It may be rubbish but it seems like good political business to me. I don't understand you at all."

But she only gets redder and madder so that she can hardly talk but only sort of gasp and she says looking at her husband, "To bring her into my home to mock at me! The shame of it!"

Says Mr. Edgerton very cold, "You invited her here and you undertook to behave yourself."

"Oh," she says, "I can't stand it I can't stand it!" And suddenly she busts into tears and clasps her napkin to her eyes and rushes out of the room and there the two of us is left staring at each other.

"Well Mr. Edgerton," I says, "I am very much puzzled about this because what have I done?"

"You have not done nothing," he says.

"Is it that she thinks I have been too familiar talking about the Spokesman like He was one of us plain people?"

But he says no that is not it. "The truth is Miss Riggs I have not been able to persuade my wife that you and I are seriously interested in public questions and so when you sit and talk about helping me it seems to her that we are playing a game to make her ridiculous."

"Oh that is it!" I says. "But does she not know that this is a free country and that I have got a vote the same as she has?"

"You are perfectly right," he says, "and let us go on with our conversation and our dinner."

But of course I am not hungry no more I have got some self-respect for all my needing a meal and I says, "No Mr. Edgerton it will have to be some other time because I don't think I had ought to stay in this house it would only be making your wife angrier than ever."

First he tries to stop me but then he says that he will

drive me home—imagine him taking me in that electric coop that he drives her in! I says, "No Mr. Edgerton it will not be the first time that I have gone home in a street car and I will do it once more," I says.

"But Miss Riggs," he says, "am I to lose your political counsel?"

"No," I says, "you can phone me tomorrow but right now I want you to go in and see your wife and try to fix it up with her," I says, "and not make her no madder by taking me home alone." And so I make him get my things and I walk home and gee Mom all the way I am thinking I will never know what was going to be the rest of that dinner!

LETTER XIII

IN WHICH I MISS ANOTHER HALF DINNER

DEAR MOM:

Of course I was on pins and needles all day waiting for Mr. Edgerton to call me so as I could find out what had happened between him and his wife. And just when I was done work and ready to go out of the beauty parlor he phoned and gee then I had to break a date with Adaire Huggins to go to a show with her and all the girls is getting more and more sorer because I am so up-stage with them having an affair with a gentleman and not telling them nothing.

Well Mr. Edgerton took me to the Chink place again and we et some more chop-guey and there was no detective watching us and we had a good chat. And he says that Mrs. Edgerton is so angry she says she will never speak to him again, and then she tells him that she is going to write to the Spokesman about how her husband is taking a manicure girl to dinners with him and pretending that this girl gives him the ideas that the Spokesman has to say to all the newspaper reporters of the whole world. And of course if she does that it will mean that Mr. Edgerton will be out of his job because of course the Spokesman is a very moral man and therefore somewhat suspicious and it would not be possible to persuade Him that it was just for my ideas that Mr. Edgerton was taking me to dinner and anyhow if it was true it would be worse because it would insult Him to know where His ideas comes from.

And so Mr. Edgerton is very much worried and I says to him, "Do you really think that she will do such a mean thing?"

He says, "I do not know for is it possible to say what a woman will do when she is very angry?"

I says, "Yes it is possible," I says, "if you do not mind answering me a very personal question."

"What is that Miss Riggs?"

"Will you tell me whether Mrs. Edgerton has got any money of her own?"

"No she has not."

"Then Mr. Edgerton," I says, "you may rest quite easy for she is not going to say a word to the Spokesman nor to anyone else that will tell because don't you see that if she done that she would be throwing her bread and butter in the mud?" I says.

"But she is frightfully angry Miss Riggs almost hysterical."

"That is all right," I says. "But when a woman gets hysterical she always keeps one corner of her brains that knows what she is doing and why. Mrs. Edgerton has got a swell apartment and an electric coop and a squirrel-skin coat and all them things is very nice and what is making her angry is the idea that I am getting a part of them away from her. But that is not going to make her give up the rest," I says.

"Really now," he says, "you are too cynical about women."

"No," I says, "but women have had to get what they have got from men and they have had to learn how. But maybe these is things that it is not right for women to tell to men so if you do not mind I will talk to you about the Spokesman and what He thinks about my idea that He should have a lot of pictures took showing Himself as a farmer's Boy back on the old homestead."

Well he tells me that he has talked about the idea with the Spokesman who is very much enthused about it and thinks it will be a great publicity stunt. And He is going to send up word for them to water the hay on the old place and grow it just as quick as they can and when it is high enough He will take His private train with about a hundred newspaper reporters up there and they can take pictures of the great Man riding a hayrake and that will surely be better than riding a camelephant. And Mr. Edgerton says he has spoke to the reporters also and they are keen about it and one of them has got the promise of a picture of the Spokesman with His arm about His favorite cow that He milked when He was a boy and when the general manager of the

Amalgamated Press Association or something like that got wind about what they was planning he telegraphed for a life-size picture of the Spokesman leading old Dobbin home from the pasture.

Mr. Edgerton says it is a shame that hay grows so late in them artie regions and there is no way you can imitate it in a motion picture studio. And then I says, "Look-a-here Mr. Edgerton," I says, "I have got a crow to pick with you and now is the time."

"Did you get it out of the chop-guey?" he says because of course he is feeling jolly over that idea I have give him and what a blow it will be to Senator Buttles that grew up in a town and went to a college and is no good at all for the old homestead stuff.

"But this is no joke," I says. "I have had it in mind ever since you sent out that story about the Spokesman buying a dozen spring suits to help the wholesale clothing trade. What I want to know is has He honestly bought them?"

"Well Miss Riggs," he says, "I think we can feel reasonably certain that He has because he is fifty-three years old and He surely must of bought a spring suit every four years of His life."

"That may be," I says, kind of shocked, "but that is not what anybody is going to make out of that story Mr. Edgerton it was meant to be took that He had bought all them suits this year. And what I have got to say to you is I have always been brought up to tell the truth and I thought that I was helping to get the truth told to the plain people and if them that is in charge is all cynical about it then I could not be happy and I would rather have nothing to do with it."

Well Mom he sees that I am serious and he says again that I am just like the Spokesman I have a natural deep reverence for great ideals and that is why I am able to understand Him so good. I says, "Yes but then why does He let you give out stories about Him that is not true?"

He thinks for a while and then he says, "Miss Riggs I am going to explain something to you that at first you may find hard to understand. There is a difference between public life and other life and there is a kind of truth for each. I think maybe it will be easier for you to understand because you tell me that your mother was once an actress."

"Yes," I says, "she was a great actress she played Eliza in Uncle Tom's Cabin for many years."

"Well," he says, "then you must of been to plays and

maybe behind the scenes and you know that a play can be true as a play and yet it don't have to be true in other ways. For instance suppose your mother is playing the part of a young girl well she makes up that way and she pretends to be happy and the audience is all delighted and they get a truth out of that play. But it may be that really your mother is older and has got children at home and one of them has got the croup—I believe you told me one of them had—and your mother is not feeling happy that night at all yet she has got to play that she is happy because that is the play-truth but if she was to act the real truth and cry on the stage why she would spoil the show and the audience would not get the truth of the play at all and they would go home sore."

Of course I can see that. But I says, "This that we are talking about is real life—"

"But are you sure?" he says. "Suppose you was to get behind the scenes and discover that this game of politics is another kind of a play and that everybody in it has got to pretend that they are different from their real selves."

Well of course I am kind of stunned and he can see it in my face and he says, "Does that shock you so much?" he says. "Don't you see that the people have got to have ideals they have got to believe in great men?"

"Yes," I says, "but aren't there no real great men?"

"There is now and then a great man," he says, "but he is very scarce and most generally you will find that he is not available for Spokesman. There can be a thousand different reasons maybe he is not acceptable to the Knights of Columbus or maybe he was born in Kishineff or maybe he believes in evolution or maybe his wife has divorced him or maybe none of the big bankers is ever met him. So you have got to take somebody that has been careful and not made no enemies and then when you have got him you have got to do the best you can by him and the daughter of a famous actress should ought to understand how much a skillful make-up and the right costumes can do to say nothing of a highly skilled press agent and a good lady assistant," he says with a bow.

But his little compliment don't help him for I says, "Then you are all the time fooling the plain people!" I says.

"Miss Riggs," he says, "you are a serious young lady and I want you to stop and think what would happen to this country if the people was to lose their reverence for the

Spokesman that lives up in the big white house and tells them what to think and what to do?"

Well of course I cant think what would happen but Mr. Edgerton he says, "Look here I have got a piece out of a paper from a town in the middle west and there was a man from that town that come to Washington and he shook the hand of the Spokesman and then he went back home and when the word got out that he had actually shook the hand of the Spokesman the members of his lodge passed a resolution and they stood him up by the door and every one of the seventy-five men in the lodge filed by him and shook the hand that had shook the hand of the Spokesman. And that is what you call Faith Miss Riggs that is having an ideal and if all them seventy-five men was to lose it what would happen to them the whole seventy-five would get drunk and go home and beat their wives."

And he goes on, "Yes Miss Riggs," he says, "it would mean riot and red revolution. You can go and ask any of them Bolshivikis if there is anything they would like better than to have the American people get the idea that the Man they have got for Spokesman is a poor little Feller with carroty hair and a sallow skin that suffers from constitutional timidity and has got where He is by always waiting for His mind to be made up for Him—just you ask them Bolshivikis and hear them whoop with delight."

"Mr. Edgerton," I says, "you must know I have never met no Bolshivikis and don't never expect to."

"There is a plenty of them," he says, "right here in Washington D. C. some of them is in the Senate and I tell you it puts a grave responsibility on you and me and other loyal Americans. Because this is what has happened Miss Riggs right in the middle of the show the leading Gentleman has went and died and the Understudy has took His place and it is the most awful job that has ever fell onto a theatrical management in the entire history of the American drama," he says. "Because in this here political play there is no way that the Understudy can ever have a chance to rehearse with the rest of the company, one minute He is just a sort of callboy sitting out on a cracker-box and the next minute He must put on full regimentals and walk out into the spotlight and make a speech. And that means Miss Riggs a most dreadful problem for the rest of the cast that has got to get behind and support Him and for the stage-directors and the scene-shifters and worst of all the critics that has got to write up the show next morning. And that is the

God's truth about my job and why I have got to have help so bad and you as a good loyal citizen and the daughter of a great actress has got to understand me and help with your great experience."

Well Mom of course I am floored. All I can do is to sit there and at last I says, "Mr. Edgerton I have heard what you tell me and I suppose it is right but I hope you won't mind it has shocked me so that I do not think I can eat no more Chinese dinner," I says, "but I will go home and think it over and decide what I can do to help my country."

Your bewildered daughter

MAME.

LETTER XIV

IN WHICH I GO ON A STRIKE

DEAR MOM:

I have not saw Mr. Edgerton for three days and I am just as glad because it has give me time to think things over and get your letter. You are right I suppose if we cannot get what we want in this world we have got to make out with what we have. I know that you would not of chose to live in the gas-house district of Camden New Jersey if you could of had your own way nor would I maybe of had so many brothers and sisters.

Well Mr. Edgerton did not call up I have noticed that gentlemen likes to have you pretty and cheerful and if you take things too serious and worry them with questions they do not call up so often. But all the same I had to get over my shock of hearing him say that the work he does for the Spokesman up there in the big white house is only a sort of a play and that I have got to get used to the idea of not telling the truth about the Spokesman. And then too I am wondering what Mr. Edgerton's wife is doing and if she is going to tell on him and me and I am sore because she should think that because I am a manicure girl I cannot be fit to know her husband and help him with his politics.

P. S. Well he has called again and we have went to dinner and a movie and it was a lovely sweet story called "Heart's Athrob" and Mr. Edgerton says to me, "There now you see Miss Riggs are we not better and purer and sweeter for having saw such a lovely story about great souls and pitiful sufferings?" And of course I cannot deny that we are

for I have got tears in my eyes and he says, "Just such a beautiful picture as that I wish to make for the American people to look upon and I have got to make it out of that poor little Man that lives up there in the big white house and you have got to help me," he says, "and we will be the greatest pair of showmen in the whole of creation."

I says, "Mr. Edgerton I am going to try my best but it seems to me that all the inspiration goes out of me when I have been told that it is not the truth. I don't understand how it can of happened and I want you to tell me more about this game of politics how it come about that a Man like what you say the Spokesman is can of got in such a high office."

He says, "It was a series of strange accidents Miss Riggs like what you would see in a melodrama. To begin with this little Man was a sort of political Office-boy for the rich men in his state that put him into office because He would always do what they said. It is a state with a lot of Catholics in it and so if you are going to get elected to anything you have got to learn to walk like you had broken bottles under your feet and He was the best bottle-walker of them all so He come to be Governor but then He had a crisis to deal with there was a strike in the city of the policemen—"

"Policemen?" I says. "But I thought that policemen was to put down strikes!"

"So it is supposed to be but this time the policemen went on a strike themselves."

"Well," I says, "but that must of been the Reds!"

"So the papers said but the policemen said it was because they couldn't live on their wages. You know that policemen is mostly Irish Catholics that don't usually go Bolshiviki but always vote the Democratic ticket and it happened that the mayor of the city was a Democrat and he fixed it up with them to give them a raise in wages and the strike was to be called off. But the bankers and the business men don't like no wage-raises because it sets a bad example and so they went to the Governor and they says, 'Governor you was elected on a program of strict economy and law and order and here this Irish Catholic Democratic son-of-a-sea-cook is going to get all the votes away from you. So they say for the Governor to break up the settlement and He does it because the Governor is bigger than the mayor you see. He goes to the city and Him and the mayor has a meeting in a hotel-room and the mayor pastes Him one in the eye and knocks Him down.'"

"But I thought you said the Governor was bigger!" I says.

"I mean bigger legally He has got more power."

"Well then but why didn't he put the mayor in jail?"

"Well Miss Riggs I will tell you the Spokesman, that was the Governor He has always been a deeply religious man you have perhaps noticed in His speeches He tells the people that the solution of their problems must be found in spirituality."

"Yes I have saw that," I says, "and I think it is very beautiful of Him to say."

"Well just so Miss Riggs and so when the mayor pastes Him one in the eye He turns the other eye to him and so through the rest of the strike He is shut up in His hotel room. But that don't matter because the bankers and the business men take charge and they gets out the college-boys and smashes the strike with clubs and brick-bats and law and order is safe. And when the Governor sees that it is all over He gets out a rousing proclamation in which He says that He is determined to put down law-breakers and of course that tickles the newspapers they spread it all over the front page and the public that don't know it is over they goes wild because you know how it was Miss Riggs a few years ago we was in the middle of smashing the Reds and shipping them back to the country where they come from seeing they don't like this one. And of course the plain people was scared out of their wits to realize that the Bolshivikis had been so clever because if Irish Catholic policemen goes Red who would there be left to stay white?"

"I remember reading about it," I says, "now that you tell me and I know I was scared myself."

"Exactly and this Strong Silent Man He was the One that had put down the revolution so when the next party convention come off and the politicians was looking round for somebody for Vice-Spokesman why here He was and the convention goes wild and He is nominated in a whirlwind. And how is anybody going to know that the Old Spokesman is going to die and leave this scared little Office-boy the job of telling the American people what to think?"

"Well Mr. Edgerton," I says, "I see how it is now of course and I am very much obliged to you for explaining and of course I will do the best I can," I says, "because whatever happens we have got to hold them Reds down. Of course I have got no use for labor unions that is just a bunch of leaders looking for a chance to wear white collars

and what do they care if they call a strike and the wives and children has got to go hungry at home?"

"That is it exactly," he says, "your sound common sense as usual and it looks as if there was some more strikes coming and they will try to put them off on the Spokesman, and you will be the little girl that will know what to tell Him to say about it."

Well we are walking home and I am nearly there and I tell him he had better not go no farther because we don't know what his wife may be doing and we have got to be careful so we shakes hands and parts and I climb up to my hall-bedroom and I forgot to tell you Mom my landlady has give me an embroidered splasher that has got a red lily on it to hang on my wall and it is a lovely decoration she done that because we have got to be friends since she was there when Mrs. Edgerton come to see me and insulted me. Well it is a good thing to be friends with your landlady because some time when I get stuck for my rent for a few days she will be more polite with me.

P. S. Well Mom it is the next day and I have just got back from the Elite Beauty Parlors and my God I have sure had a time I don't know if I will ever go back because we have had a strike and who do you think was the leader of it of all people in this world your own Mamie Riggs and what do you know about that? I will tell you the story right off.

It was Florabelle that begun it I call her Floradumbelle but she is got good business sense all the same and she says to Hattie Schoenstein, "My landlady has raised the rent on me a dollar a week and what am I going to do must I go without my lunches?" And Hattie that I have called Hotaire she says, "And the madame has raised the price of a manicuring twenty-five cents but what good does that do us?" And that is no hot air either Mom.

And then Adaire Huggins she says, "Why shouldn't we get a raise when everything else is being boosted?" And I says, "I am with you girls," and they asks me will I be the one to do the talking because they seem to think I am good at it because of my political experience which they suspect I have had though of course I have not told them and they have not found out who Mr. Edgerton is.

Well so we go to the private office but it is not so private because Madame Lafferty lets out a yell and she says, "What you ask me for more money and when I am on the verge

of bankruptcy because the landlord is holding me to this lease that was made in war-time?"

"Us girls is got to live too," I says, "it is war-time for us right now."

"I can get a plenty to do your work for less," she says. "And they will be girls that will fix their hair like I tell them to and they will behave like ladies and not be having the telephone ringing all day so that my customers do not know whether I am running a beauty-parlor or a date-ranch."

Well of course I know that is a slam at me and I am hot and I says, "All right ma'am," I says, "and you go and find them slave-girls right off because I am a free-born American citizen and I am through," I says, "and come on girls let's get out." And with that we turns into the parlors and there is the customers with their fingers half done and their hair half waved and we shouts to the girls, "It is a strike we'll have a dollar extra a week or we quit!"

And they all puts down their things and they shout, "Strike! Strike!" And the madame she yells, "Out with you you bunch of hussies!" And we grabs our things and out we troop and there is a customer coming in and we says to him it is a gentleman, "This place is closed but two blocks down the street you will find a beauty parlor where they pays a living wage to their hands," we says.

And of course he don't go in so I says, "We will picket the old she-devil," and we begin walking up and down and out she comes rushing without her hat on and she gets the copper on the corner and brings him up and she says, "Drive these hussies away from my door they are ruining my trade," she says.

Well the copper he grins kind of good-natured and says, "Move along now girls." And I ups I and says, "Officer this here is a strike," I says, "and we are picketing this place."

"Well you will have to move on because you are drawing a crowd and that is disturbing the peace."

But I says, "Officer do you mean to tell me that it is the business of the police to break strikes?" I says. "Is this a free country or is it Roossia?" But all he says is, "Move along girls move along," and he pushes us down the street and when we try to come back he says he will call a patrol-wagon and so there we are it is tyranny and injustice such as our ancestors rose against but what can we do there is nobody to take the part of poor working-girls on strike and so now I am sitting at home and I don't know if I have got a

job or not and I shall soon find out whether my landlady is as much friends with me as my splasher seems to show.

Your worried

MAME.

LETTER XV

IN WHICH I LOSE MY LOVER

DEAR MOM:

I do hate to write such bad news but you made me promise I would tell you everything so here it is.

I have not got no job today and the worst of it is I am the only one that is not. I went back to the Elite Beauty Parlors this a. m. thinking I was to go on leading the strike but what do I see but everyone of them girls come up one by one and try to sneak into the place. I says, "What are you doing are you going to desert your union and your class?" And Adaire Huggins she says, "Mame, I am sorry but I have made a fool out of myself," and Hotaire Schoenstein she says, "Mame I have got to eat," and in they goes and back to work without no raise in wages and I am left standing on the sidewalk.

I would not go in if I was to die for it and anyhow I would only get kicked out because the madame she thinks I am the cause of that strike. But gee Mom aint it awful to think how the working-class will throw each other down and all they would have to do would be to stand together and they could get anything they want!

Well I go down the street to the La Princesse Beauty Shoppe but they have got no need for a manicurist, and then I go to the Betty Blue Rooms and then to the Rosamonde and the La Belle and the La Coquette and the La Charme and all the other ones that I have heard of but I think they must of heard about what I done because they have none of them got nothing. And gee Mom it is begun to rain and I am wetting my new clothes and my best shoes is in the slop and is getting wore down at the heel and I am so blue I could be made into paint. At last I am clean done up and come home and flop down on my bed and cry. I have got only three dollars in my pocket and here I was hoping to save up so as I could send a little to you!

The worst is I have lost Mr. Edgerton too because he will go to the Elite and that old she-devil will not tell him where to find me and I have never let him come to this house on

account of his wife being so mad and all and I do not think he even knows my number and if I write to his home his wife will get it and he has told me never to ring him up nor to write to him to the big white house for fear the Spokesman or somebody might get it. What I am to do I cannot think but tomorrow I will have to look for a job in some barber-shop.

P. S. Well it has been another rainy day and I have tried the barber-shops and gee Mom there was some awful holes where a decent girl would not work if it was to save her life but even so I did not find nothing. There was one feller that said he would give me a table for half what I earned but I would have to of had my own set and I have not got no set and no money to buy one. And gee Mom I see I should of saved some of my money but what it is I should of gone without I cannot see. And some fellers was rude to me and some called me sweet-heart and I would of liked to of batted both kinds on the jaw.

But please do not say anything to Pop about my troubles because it would only worry him and I am going to find some way out. My rent is not due till two days, and I guess I have got a few days credit with Mrs. Budd seeing that she had such a fine lot of gossip out of that time that Mrs. Edgerton come to bawl me out for going to dinner with her husband.

P. S. Again. Well I have went to about fifty hotels big and little and to a lot more barber-shops but nothing doing. And I have only et some milk and crackers because I am scared of spending my last money. But I had to buy a paper of course for I must not get out of touch with international affairs. And I see there is a great coal strike being threatened and the whole country will be without coal and nobody knows what to do about it and it says the Spokesman announced that He has took the matter under advisement and of course I know what that means He does not know what to say about it and He is waiting for me to tell Mr. Edgerton to tell Him what to say. I picture Mr. Edgerton rushing around frantic trying to find out where I am and maybe having to call in the secret service and so I am desperate and tonight I have wrote him a letter to the big white house and I have wrote it like this, Dear Sir, My father Mr. James Riggs wishes me to advise you that he has changed his address, and then I give the address of this

room and I think that is not suspicious and I will come home early tomorrow and see if he has sent me a telegram or maybe a special delivery letter.

P. S. Another. Well Mom I have had an awful grief and you sure do get troubles when you go into public life it is more dangerous than any Western I have ever saw. I have been trying to get a job as a waitress or anything and about five o'clock I come home tired as a dog and who should I see going up the steps of the house but Walter. He is just about to ring the bell when I hollers and he turns round and in about three seconds more he is got me in his arms and gee Mom it is awful what muscles that boy is got packing crates all day and throwing them onto trucks. And there he makes a show of me in the street and pulls me to pieces and I am so excited that I am crying. And he tells me that the warehouse shut up for a day on account of the boss's wife having died and it is Saturday and so he is got two days off and has throwed away all this money for a trip to Washington just to see me.

He wants me to go to dinner of course and I tell him to hold his horses while I run upstairs and powder my nose and so I go and when I come down again what do I see? Walter is still standing down on the sidewalk and up at the top of the step is Mr. Edgerton just about to ring the bell! You see how it is they do not know each other of course and Mr. Edgerton is come right at that inconvenient moment and there he is. When he sees me of course he lifts his hat and he says, "How do you do Miss Riggs?" he says. "Well I am sure glad to get in touch with you I have not had nobody to go to dinner with and I am so lonesome I do not know where to go." He says that kind of jolly like he always is you know but he is got a pretty loud voice and there is Walter listening to every word of it and then looking at the taxi-cab that is brought Mr. Edgerton and his face is as black as the thunderstorm we had this morning.

Well a women that is trained to social life like me had ought to know what to do but I don't and all I can say is, "Mr. Edgerton I have a friend that is just come to see me." And Mr. Edgerton is rattled too because of course he don't want to meet nobody. But there is nothing to do but go down the steps and I says, "Mr. Edgerton meet Mr. Rigley," I says and Walter is not got sense to shake hands but just growls how-de-do and I am thinking as fast as a run-away express train.

Walter he says, "Well I see you have a previous engagement," and he turns on his heel and starts to walk off but of course I grabs him by the arm and makes him turn round and I says, "Look here Walter this is not what you think this is a business matter and this gentleman is a government official and I am doing important work for him," I says. "What sort of work?" says Walter and you know that kind of pug-nose face that he has got it is already made up for a fight.

And of course I can't answer him because Mr. Edgerton has forbid me to. So what can I do but put it up to Mr. Edgerton? I says, "Mr. Edgerton, Walter Rigley is my fyansay," I says. And Mr. Edgerton says, "Oh I did not know you was engaged," and I says, "I have never had occasion to tell you. But now Walter is got two days off from the job of packing goods in a warehouse and he has come to see me as a surprise party. And I think I have got to explain matters to him if you will please let me because he is a very good boy and a one hundred percent American and when he knows that this is government work that we are doing and that it is because we have got to educate the people and keep the Bolshivikis from getting a hold of them he will keep the secret and you can trust him the same as me."

So Mr. Edgerton can't do nothing else but say, "All right Miss Riggs I will take your word for Mr. Rigley." And I turns to Walter and says, "There is nobody in the world but my mom and my pop that I have trusted with this but it is all straight and it will be explained to you."

And then Mr. Edgerton says for Walter to go to dinner with us but Walter he says, "Not on your life I ast her first," he says, "and if there is any dinner you will go with me." So I says, "It will have to be that way Mr. Edgerton because I know this boy and he is only got one fault and that is that he is a mule."

So Mr. Edgerton says all right and we gets into the taxi and Walter's shoulders is so broad that there is no room for mine in the seat but he puts me on his knees and you can see he is not going to let me be in Mr. Edgerton's way. And I am telling Walter about who Mr. Edgerton is and what we are doing and gee you can see that it is a hard lump for Walter to swallow he don't know what to make of it whether I am kidding him or not but Walter is like the Spokesman in one way when he don't know what to say it don't hurt him none to say nothing.

Well the Greek restaurant is nearest and so we are pretty

soon eating some more dinner cooked in mutton suet but gee Mom I could eat it if it was axel-grease I am so hungry. But I have got to play the social game and keep these two male animals from biting each other so I says, "Mr. Edgerton I have not had no chance to ask you but I can see that the Spokesman is in trouble because He does not know what to say about this here coal strike."

And he says, "That is right it is a very great worry to Him, and what do you think about it?" And I says, "Well Pop says you can't make no gas without coal and what would I do if I come home to my room in the evening and there was no light in it?" And Mr. Edgerton says, "That is true, coal is a necessity of modern civilization." "Well then," I says, "is a lot of Hunkies and Dagoes to be allowed to get together and hold a pistol at people's heads and get any price they please for work? No Mr. Edgerton," I says, "it is the duty of the Spokesman to take a firm stand and say that there will not be no such strike allowed."

And he says, "I guess you are right and we will work it out on that basis."

"But I says, "Mr. Edgerton He must not go and say that unless He means to act on it."

And he says, "But why not?" and I says, "Because it will not do." And he says, "Well Miss Riggs but you cannot do business with the Spokesman that way because you would never be able to say nothing because He will never do nothing."

But I says, "If He says He won't allow the strike and then He does allow it, what will people think of Him?" And he says, "It will be like it has always been and when the time comes people will of forgot it." "But that is nonsense," I says, "it will be quoted against Him what He said at the beginning." And Mr. Edgerton says, "By who? A bunch of cranks here and there? The newspapers will not say nothing because we have got them and what else does it matter?"

Well of course I don't like that but I have learned that it is what you have got to do with the Spokesman so I says "All right." But I have forgot about Walter and my God all of a sudden what do I see his face is got red and he is rose up and he says, "Do the pair of you really think I am going to stand for this?" "Why Walter what do you mean?" I says, and he says, "You are playing me for a sucker," he says, "but you have got the wrong one."

"Why Walter," I says, "what on earth? You think this

is not the Spokesman's Secretary?" "I don't know who it is," he says, "but you cannot make me believe that the Spokesman is no such poor fish as this." "But," I says, "look at the papers to-morrow afternoon," I says, "and you will see it all just as I have said it."

And says Walter, "You want me to think that the American people is a bunch of boobs that you can string along like this?" I says, "Walter, I have told Mr. Edgerton that you are a patriot and a lover of your country and that you can be trusted with these great state secrets," I says, "And now are you going to throw me down?"

But he looks at me and his eyes is flashing and his fists is clenched and I think he is going to hit me or Mr. Edgerton I aint sure which and he says with his voice trembling furious, "Mamie Riggs," he says, "I thought you was a decent girl but I see you have took the easy road," he says. "But it was enough to insult our love," he says, "you needn't of insulted my brains too. I leave you to your new gentleman and I hope he keeps you good and that's all." And with that he turns and walks off quick and I lets out a yell that scares the whole dining room and I runs to grab him but he is gone out the door and lost in the crowd and there I am standing and crying like Lucy Lonesome in "The Broken Love."

Your miserable

MAME.

LETTER XVI

IN WHICH I AM MADE A GRAMMARIAN

DEAR MOM:

Well here it is a Sunday morning and I have got no job and I have got no lover and I am sure in the dumps. But Mom you have got to see Walter for me quick as you can and explain to him how foolish he is been to quarrel with me because it is all true like I told him. You must make him understand that Mr. Edgerton really is the Secretary to the Spokesman and that the great Man up at the big white house does really say everything that me and Mr. Edgerton says for Him to say. And if it is not always true what He says well I know how shocked I was when I first found it out but you that have been a great actress can explain to that poor kid Walter how it is that you have got to play the play the way it is wrote and not the way you think it had ought to be.

And if you can fix it up with Walter you do not have to worry about me Mom for I will sure get some job even if I have to go to work in a factory. And I am going to go straight for your sake and Pop's even if Walter does believe all them hateful things about me that he said to me and right before Mr. Edgerton. Well I am going to rest my tired feet today and tomorrow I will start out looking for a job in a department store.

P. S. Oh Mom I have had the most wonderful good fortune! I told you onst that I am Cinderella and that the fairy coach was waiting for me and now it is going to take me right almost into the palace!

Well Monday a. m. I start out hunting a job and the sun is come out hot and it is like summer and I have got on my winter suit and I am nearly fainting so I have to go home and change it and gee all that I have got is a shirtwaist that is got a darn in the elbow and my old blue skirt that is all faded and it sure does make me miserable to look like that when I have been such a real lady all winter. But I put it on and am starting out again when my landlady calls me she is got a telegram that is come for me it is got no name signed but it says for me to come to lunch at the little cheap place where we have et when we was scared of Mrs. Edgerton. And of course I know it is Mr. Edgerton and I want to run back and get my good clothes on but I am late already and have got to hustle for the street car.

Well there is Mr. Edgerton waiting for me and he has has been there quite a while and he says there is a serious emergency in the government and he needs my advice and it is very inconvenient not to be able to get me quick when he needs me. And I says, "I am so sorry but I was out hunting for a job."

"What?" he says. "A job? Why is that?"

"Did you not understand that I am no more at the Elite Beauty Parlors?" I says.

"Yes," he says, "but I thought you must of got something better."

"I have not got nothing," I says. "I left that place because I am a free American citizen," I says, "and I would not stand for having that old she-devil bossing me about. And all them girls is a pack of sheep but I am one that is got some spirit."

"Of course," he says. "And what are your plans?"

"I am trying to get into a department store."

"Oh Miss Riggs," he says, "but do not do that because you had ought to have some job that will leave you time to get off now and then when your country needs you," he says.

"That is all very well," I says, "but my country has never showed me no such job," I says.

"But why did you not tell me about it?" he says.

"I did not have a chanced," I says, "what with the way that crazy boy Walter behaved and made me so ashamed and anyhow I am not going to put my troubles off on you," I says.

"Troubles?" he says. "But that is absurd Miss Riggs. What is an Administration for if it is not to have jobs?"

"You mean that you can find me one?" I says and my heart is give a jump with excitement.

"Why of course," he says. "I am the Grand Mogul of Jobs," he says. "I carry lists of them around with me I sometimes have more jobs than I can find people," he says.

And sure enough he pulls out some papers from his pocket and there is a long printed list and he says these is civil service jobs for which there is to be examinations." And let us see now," and he studies it and he reads, "Geographer," and he says, "Do you think you would like to be a Geographer?" And I says, "My God what does that do?" And then he reads, "Geologist," and he says, "That might sound pretty good."

But I says, "How can I pass an examination for such jobs as them?" and he says, "You do not have to worry about that we can pay somebody to do that for you," he says, and then he reads, "Grammarian," and he says, "There now I think that would be a fine job for you there is something cultured about being a Grammarian."

"But dear me," I says, "what would I have to do?" And he says, "You will not have to do nothing," he says, "there is always an assistant that does the work for half as much," he says. And I says, "Is that what they call economy?" and he says, "It is a system," he says. "How could you keep politics going unless people had jobs in between elections? But it is common sense you can see that politicians do not have no time to learn to be geographers and geologists and grammarians and so there have got to be assistants that know that sort of work and keep the assistants' jobs all the time no matter who gets elected," he says.

And then he says, "You will be Grammarian to the Bureau of Indian Affairs of the Department of the Interior," he says. And I says, "Can they put somebody off on a depart-

ment like that?" And he says, "Oh sure it is done all the time there is the private secretary to the Spokeslady there was no provision for such but She wanted one so they put it off on the Interstate Trade Commission," he says.

And he goes on to study the list and he says, "This is not a very good job for the salary is only \$26 per week." "Man alive," I says, "that is more money than I have ever had all at once in my life I think!" He says, "You will find your tastes grow and in a year you will be wanting your own car," he says.

And then he thinks a bit and he says, "Maybe we can get you an allowance for travelling expenses." I says, "Does a Grammarian have to travel?" and he says, "We will have you made a Field Grammarian and then you will be able to go wherever you want to and that will be necessary anyhow because you see if it stays hot like this very long the Spokesman will be moving to His summer home and I will have to go there and so will you and it will be much better if you have a government position then because it will not look so bad if we are saw together in a small town."

And then he looks at me a moment and he says kind of hesitating, "Miss Riggs, will you pardon me if I am extremely personal for a moment?" And I says, "Go to it," and then he tells me that the fashion in the present Administration is for a different shade of ladies' hair from what I have got. "The old Administration was what you might call a peroxide one," he says, "but the present one runs to pastel shades and I think it would be easier for both of us if you was to tone yours down. I don't know much about it, but I suppose there is ways."

"Oh sure," I says, "what have I been in a beauty parlors for? I can cut most of it off and wear some sort of a turban effect till the new color grows out," I says. "Or I can cut it real short and say that I have had the typhoid fever or something." And he says, "All right typhoid is more respectable than peroxide and when you have got that done we can go to better restaurants for our dinners."

Well so then I says, "How is the missus getting along these days and has she said anything more about me?"

And he tells me that she has got something new to occupy her mind she is being syked—I don't know if that quite the right word but it is the way it sounds and he explained to me the way to be syked there is a man and you pay him ten dollars an hour to listen to you tell him all your troubles and about your soul and he says that it is got to be the most

fashionable thing for ladies to be syked. And I says, "It is a pretty expensive fashion it seems to me," but he says, "My God no not at all this town is full of husbands that would pay a man ten dollars an hour to listen to their wife's troubles all day long and the night too," he says. "And it is a great relief to their friends as well." And I says, "Then while she is being syked you and me can go to dinner," and he says, "Exactly."

Well then he tells me what it is that he wants to ask me about and it seems there is an international problem because there is a Hungarian count that wants to come into this country because his wife is here and she is sick but he is not being let to come because they say he is a Bolshiviki but there is an awful fuss being made about it.

And I says, "But why I thought we had regular laws to keep them Dagos and Hunkies and Wops out of this country." And he says, "Yes, but this one is a sure enough count and is a rich man too and the laws is not meant for that sort. And besides," he says "the state department is not got very much nerve just now the old gentleman that is in charge of it is called by the name of Scared Sally and he is even more scared than the Spokesman Himself. He was a senator from his home state but that state kicked him out and so the Spokesman is give him a home in the cabinet; and he is scared of this Bolshiviki count to let him in and he is scared to not let him in and they are all in a terrible stew up at the big white house and this evening there is got to be a statement give out about why he is not let in and they can't think of no reasons except some that they cannot give out."

"And what is them?" I says and he tells me a funny story, gee it is complicated these international affairs!

It seems that some of the young fellers in this state department is gone and got themselves wives out of this here foreign nobility thinking it was something extra swell you know but now there is come revolutions and all these Dago counts and Hunky princes and Wop grand dukes is kicked out or is about to get kicked out and the young men in the state department finds themselves stuck with second-hand wives as you might say that is to say they is badly faded and passay and not noble or swell no more. In this here country of Hungary they have got back but only for a little while because this Bolshiviki count is going to kick them out again and so they hate him and that is why our state department is fighting so hard to help them and keep the secretarie's wives noble as long as it can be done. And that is why our govern-

ment lends loans to these countries and why they dassn't allow that nobody shall come in from them countries and tell what is going on there.

And I says, "But Mr. Edgerton it seems to me that in a case like that it is very plain what to do." "And what is it?" he says. And I says, "I would say that it is a situation that the least said about it the better." And he says, "Yes of course." And I says, "Then why not say the least?" And he says, "What is the least?" And I says, "The least is nothing."

Well he looks at me like I was prophet come down from heaven or something and he says, "My God Miss Riggs you are a wonder!" "No," I says, "I am only a field Grammarian," I says, "but even so I can see that when there is nothing you can say the thing to do is to hold your mouth. And I have heard so much in the papers about this Spokesman being a Strong Silent Man and it is seems to me that this is just the time for Him to be Strong in His Silence and Silent in His Strength," I says, "and you had better just make up your mind that this here Bolshiviki count stays out and that nobody says a word about it from the first to the last," I says, "and that is the way I would play the game of politics if I was Him."

And he says, "Miss Riggs you *are* Him, I believe! You are Him in the Female Incarnation! And so I am

Your very flattered

MAME.

LETTER XVII

IN WHICH I BECOME A SYKER

DEAR MOM:

I have your letter in which you send me two dollars and it is sure good of you and Pop to think of me with all the troubles of your own you have got. It come at just the right moment for I had got down to only nine cents, and I did not dare to buy the morning paper to see what the Spokesman has been saying. Mr. Edgerton has got it fixed that I have been appointed Emergency Field Grammarian but I do not get the salary until Saturday and these two dollars will save my life.

And oh Mom I am glad that you will talk to Walter for me. I know that you and Pop are not keen about having me in love with a poor shipping-clerk but all the same that is

what is kept me good through all the temptations of a great city and so you must help me and make Walter understand that I really am helping Mr. Edgerton like I say and telling him what he is to tell the Spokesman to tell to the American people.

Well Mr. Edgerton is been so good I have saw him again and he seen that I had on that poor old shirtwaist and he says, "Why where is your fine good clothes?" he says. And so I have to tell him that it is got so hot that I cannot wear a winter suit no more and he says, "Come along now you have got to be dressed like a Grammarian," he says and so he takes me into a department store and buys me everything all new a pearl grey suit with a hat and shoes and all and so I can be a summer lady as well as a winter one.

But he tells me some very bad news that the secretary of state that they call Scared Sally has decided that he will let that Bolshiviki count come into the country provided that he does not do no propaganda about politics while he is here but will only see his wife that is sick. And I says, "My God Mr. Edgerton that is a mistake because them fellers is not to be trusted and anybody can see that it is propaganda for a feller like that just to be alive."

And he says, "That is exactly right Miss Riggs it is what I have said to them."

And I says, "But why does the Spokesman allow such things?" and he says that He is leaving it all to that Scared Sally.

And I says, "But Mr. Edgerton they have already give out a statement that he will not be let to come in. The Spokesman has said it Himself."

"Yes," he says, "but the Spokesman can always take back what He has said."

"But Mr. Edgerton," I says, "how can He when He is said it to a hundred newspaper reporters and they have wrote it down?"

"He just says that He didn't say it and they all have to say they made a mistake."

"But my God don't none of them ever kick?"

"Two of them done it onst but all they got was they was not allowed to no more interviews which put them out of business and taught the others better."

"Well," I says, "if a Man has got all the newspapers where you can walk on their faces like that," I says, "why does He want an electric camelephant to ride?"

He says it has always been that way there used to be what

was called an Ananias Club in Washington and that was for people that had objected to the Spokesman changing his mind. He says that now they don't allow no stenographic notes of the Spokesman's interviews so that it will not be possible to prove what He has said. "And so you see," he says, "how easy it is to be a Great Man."

"Well," I says, "they will see that Hunkie count will make a fool out of them all," and he says, "That is exactly what will happen and it will give the Spokesman a black eye worse than the one that He got up there when He had the police-strike," he says. "The truth is I am sick of telling Him what to do and not having it done and if somebody was to offer me a good position in private life I would take it tomorrow."

I says, "Oh Mr. Edgerton do not desert your country and do not desert me."

"Don't you worry Mamie Riggs," he says and that is the first time he has ever called me Mamie. "I am not agoing to desert you and you will have a friend in me for the rest of your life for you have got more sense than any male politician in the business," he says and of course that is a sweet thing to say and he gives my arm a squeeze as we are walking on the street but then I am scared because I have got to remember that he is a married man and all.

So to remind him I says, "And how is the wife getting on?"

He says, "Oh she is having the time of her life because this getting syked is the best thing that is ever come along so she says."

And then he goes on to tell me about this and it seems that a lady pays this syking man ten dollars an hour to listen to her troubles and about her soul and she gets to be more and more interested in that syker and that is a regular part of the treatment it seems and it is called by a long name it is a Transference.

And I says, "Well Mr. Edgerton they are always getting new names for old things," I says, "for when you go to a moving picture that thing is what is called a Triangle."

He laughs and says that is so but I can see that he is kind of sore about it and he says, "That feller is got Mrs. Edgerton running there to see him every day and telling him her fusses with me and he is calling her up on the phone and making dates with her and I have made up my mind that I am not going to stand it much longer and I have told her so in plain words."

And I says, "But look here Mr. Edgerton," I says, "how

is this that you are calling me up on the phone and making dates with me and you do not want her to object to that," I says.

"Oh," he says, "but that is different."

And I says, "But why is it different?" and he says, "Because it is a matter of business with you and me."

And I says, "Yes, but it is a matter of business with him also and if he is getting ten dollars an hour for it it is a matter of very good business indeed."

He is kind of embarrassed and says, "She has not failed to point that out to me." And I says, "She naturally would not fail because we women are good at seeing things that is right in front of our eyes," I says, "and what is sauce for the goose is sauce for the gander though not meaning to speak disrespectful of you and Mrs. Edgerton," I says. "Now you have got to give her a square deal and you may be sure that I am not going to help you do nothing else."

And he laughs and says that I have become his syker and I says, "Well at least I have cost you less than ten dollars an hour," I says.

Well we go to a restaurant a swell one because I have got my swell new clothes now and I have got my bright hair all cut off and my head fixed with a veil and I am a respectable Emergency Field Grammarian so that a member of the Administration can buy me a dinner without its being a scandal. And Mom in this place they are so respectable that they bring the cocktails to you in a soup-tureen and you eat them out of a dish with a spoon and gee Mom it is so funny!

And we are talking all about international affairs and Mr. Edgerton tells me the most interesting things it seems that the police has just arrested a way high-up bootlegger and how they come to do such a thing he cannot say but the police is getting more and more higher handed all the time. I shall never forget my indignation while that one was shooing me away from the Elite Beauty Parlors while I was leading the strike.

Well anyhow they have got this bootlegger and he is got a notebook on him with all the addresses of his customers and how much they have bought and all and gee Mom it is the most awful thing because there is senators and judges and some Persons the most sacred so that I would not dare to put it into a letter except to say that a very very special friend of mine is one of them and had just got a case of genuine Scotch that very week and now it seems that some of them dry fellers in Congress is got a hold of the story and is

threatening to make speeches about it and of course none of the papers is saying a word but still everybody is scared because something might bust open. He says that is always the way in political life you can never be really safe because there is always some Bolshiviki senators that makes speeches and there is Bolshiviki papers that will print what they say.

And he told me all about how it was when this new Spokesman first come into office there was the most dreadful lot of scandals because it was found that some of the brass kings had been buying up the government. He explained to me how it is these brass fellers is very rich and great sports and is used to getting what they want and paying what it costs even if it is a member of the cabinet. And it seems that the government owned a huge brass teapot somewhere in the West and it was the brass reserve for the navy so that if ever there was to be a war we would be able to make all the brass buttons that would be needed for the sailors' uniforms. But it seems that one of the brass kings paid a hundred thousand dollars in a black bag to a member of the cabinet and got away with this brass teapot.

I says, "Look ahere Mr. Edgerton what is this that you are telling me the plot of a movie that you seen last night?" And he says, "Upon my word no it is exactly what happened and I would rather of had to enlist and sit for four years with German big Berthas dropping bomb-shells onto me than go through with all that trouble again."

I says, "What did you have to do with it?" and he says, "I was the Spokesman's Secretary all through it the same as I am now and my God you could not think of anything so awful in a nightmare. You would spend hours thinking up a story and then hold a session of the cabinet and get everybody to agree and learn it by heart and then early next morning you would get a call from the chief of the secret service that in the night they had raided the rooms of one of them Bolshiviki senators that was doing the exposures and they had found out that these senators had got evidence that would knock your story into a cocked hat. And then you would have to begin telephoning to all the members of the cabinet to get them to change the story and a few hours later the secret service would bring you word that the Bolshiviki senators had tapped your telephone lines and heard what your new story was to be. It went on like that for weeks," he says, "and the Spokesman was just about paralyzed with fright."

"Well," I says, "Mr. Edgerton does it not suggest that

maybe there is something in my idea of just telling the plane truth all the time?" But he will not hear to no such Sunday school talk as he calls it because he says, "How can you tell the truth when the truth is that everybody you know has been helping himself to everything he could get his hands on?"

I says, "Mr. Edgerton there is a lot about this political game that is hard for an outsider to understand and one of the things is how it can be called patriotism and economy and all that when people that holds high office is busy robbing the government?" I says. "It seems to me we are giving the Bolsheviks too easy an argument if that is the ways things is."

"Yes," he says, "I know it seems like that and it is complicated and hard for the plain people to understand but I have heard the Spokesman Himself explain it and it is quite all right when you get His ideas. You see there is all kinds of wealth that the government is got but is not able to make use of it because the government is got no business being in business which it cannot run economical or efficient. The right people to own all these resources is the big business men that is got the money and brains and everything and so it is a real advantage to the people when the business men get these things away from the government."

"You mean even when they have got to steal them?" I says.

"Yes," he says, "that is what the Spokesman thinks and in the long run He is right because for example take this here teapot and you will see that while the government owned it it was not doing nothing but now that the brass kings have got it they have set it on the fire and it is boiling away and making tea for people to drink."

"Well that sounds all right," I says, "but I would want to know which people is drinking the tea and is it the brass kings?"

"Well yes," he says, "I suppose it is them that gets the most of the tea but then if they hadn't of stole the teapot there wouldn't nobody of got no tea at all."

So you see again Mom how complicated these international affairs is and what a tremendous job I have got to understand them. But you tell Pop that he does not ever need to worry that I will get a swelled head even though I am getting to understand them better than him.

Your devoted daughter

MAME.

LETTER XVIII.

IN WHICH I STICK TO THE JOB

DEAR MOM:

I have got my first week's salary as Emergency Field Grammarian and gee it is wonderful. All that I have to do is to go to the department and sign my name three times and I get what is called a warrant that anybody will give me the money for. And I felt so rich and fine with that \$26 in my purse the first thing I did was to buy this money order to pay you back your two spots and three spots extra.

And then I remembered what Mr. Edgerton said that I must not lose touch with the plain people but remember how they feel so that I will be able to tell him so that he can tell the Spokesman up at the big white house what to say to all the newspaper reporters. So I decided that I would meet some plain people right away so what should I do but pay a call on the Elite Beauty Parlors? It is lovely warm spring weather and I have got on my fine new clothes and I walk in as cool as a pineapple sundae and look round and see that Floradumbelle has no customer so I walk to her table and sit myself down and I says, "Well good afternoon and how is things going in the old shop?"

Well there is the madame and she glares at me like the old she-devil that she is, and Floradumbelle she stares with her mouth open and all the other girls is stopping their work to stare and I am taking off my pearl grey gloves in no hurry and I says, "I would like to have a manicuring if this shop aint raised its prices too many times since I was here."

So of course what can she do but start work and the madame what can she do but hold her mouth and me what am I there for but to talk? So I says in a good loud voice, "Oh Flora dear I am having such a wonderful time and rising so fast in the world I am an Emergency Field Grammarian to the Bureau of Indian Affairs of the Department of the Interior and it is a most responsible position and I do not have to do a thing except what I please and I can travel and have an allowance for expenses and I am going to Camden New Jersey the first time I can be spared from the government and see my Mom and my Pop and my fyansay. And hello Adair," I says, "and hello Hotaire and hello Mary May Marie," I says, "I thought I would drop in for the sake of old times because you see I have got to keep in touch with the plain people and not forget how it is that they feel and what they think about international affairs. And what

do you say to this idea of the secretary of state that they call Scared Sally letting in this Bolshiviki count to be with his sick wife?" I says.

Well it costs me two-fifty to have that splurge but there is nothing that has made me feel so good since I come to Washington, D. C. And then I have a stroll down the street and look at all the pretty things in the shop windows and think that I am going to have seven-fifty more each week to spend like I want to only for what I send to you Mom and I sure do think this is a wonderful government and the greatest country in the whole world. And then I have got a date to have dinner with Mr. Edgerton in that same Imperial Cafay where you get the cocktails in a soup-tureen and I tell him about how I been to the Elite and show him what was the expression on Madame Lafferty's face and he says, "Mame," he says, "you might of been a great actress like your Mom."

Well then I tell him what the girls is said about that there Bolshiviki count that is to be let into the country and what a mistake it is and he says, "You can see the mistake for already the news has been cabled to that there Hungry country and there is a lot of stuff cabled back about what it is that the count would of said if he had not of pledged that he would not say nothing." And I says, "Yes I have read it and it is terrible stuff and I do not understand because it says this here Bolshiviki count is charging that the people that is opposing him is killing and shooting people and torturing them in dungeons and all that and all the time I have been told that it is the Bolshivikis that does that and here it seems to be the other side that is doing it."

And he says, "So you see just how the propaganda works," he says, "that is the whole purpose to get you to asking questions like that."

But I says, "Is it true?"

And he says, "There it is," he says, "you can see how he has sewed some doubts into a mind that had never before had none but had always believed the right thing."

"Yes but look here Mr. Edgerton stop kidding me I want to know what is the truth."

"Yes but my dear Mamie I want to show you how this poison spreads because here you are pushing me for an answer and if it had not of been for this here count you would never of thought about it at all."

And then he stops kidding and explains how it is that on one side is ladies and gentlemen what is doing the killing

and on the other side it is just common dirty workingmen and of course our country is got to see to it that the side of refinement is victorious and that the wives of the young secretaries in the state department is not stopped from being noble and rich. It would be breaking up the home he says if it was to be any other way for what would become of the foreign matrimonial market if our young men of fashion was to pay for a peach and find they have got a lemon?

Well I guess I am being a dumbell again but I do not know exactly whether he is joking but it seems that he is real angry because his advice is not took and the Spokesman is not got the sense to stay as the Strong Silent Man which is what Mr. Edgerton made Him and the only thing that any man can be when He does not know enough to be nothing else.

And by and by we got out of the restaurant and are walking in the park and it is moonlight and soft and sweet and romantic and Mr. Edgerton he says, "Well I have got some news for you my dear Mamie that I fear will make you very sad I am going to quit this job as the Spokesman's Secretary." And I says, "My God!" and my knees is like to give away.

"Yes," he says, "what is happened is that some of the brass kings is come to me with a proposition it seems they are planning a great new brass trust that is to include all the brass mines and mills of the entire country and they are scared the public may not like it and may make a fuss and force the Spokesman to do something about it and so they have asked will I come and be their head press agent and fix the stories that they will tell to all the newspapers and they have offered me just about three times what I am getting now not only from the government but from the private funds of them that is put me here to manage the Spokesman for them. And so I am going to take this new job."

Well I am so weak that I have to set on a bench and I says, "Oh Mr. Edgerton I will be so lonely!"

And he says, "That is just what I want to say that you are to come with me."

"With you Mr. Edgerton but where?"

"To Chicago for that is where the brass trust is to have its offices."

"But oh," I says, "what would I do in Chicago?"

"You will be free," he says, "and so will I because why," he says, "when you are in private business you can have

some fun and you do not have to worry about a lot of meddlesome Matties and old women in pants that is watching everything you do. And you and me can have a little apartment and be as jolly as two turtle-doves." And while he says that he is put his arm about me and he says, "Oh Mame I am sure fond of you for you are the gamest kid I ever got to know and wouldn't you like to have a nice little love-nest and with nobody to look out for but just me?"

Well Mom I am trembling all over because it is all so sudden and after all I do think that Mr. Edgerton is a mighty fine man and I have never had nothing so lovely as an apartment and he is holding me close and I can hardly think straight but I says, "Oh Mr. Edgerton do not tempt me," I says, "for I have always been a good girl and always gone straight."

"Yes," he says, "but there is nothing wrong with this for we are real friends."

"But you have got a wife!" I says.

"But she does not care for me she is interested in that syker now."

"But that is only for a moment," I says, "and she does love you I know for I have saw it in her face and what is more I know that you love her because else why should you of been jealous of the syker? And then too I have got a fyansay and you know he is a good boy—"

"But my God Mamie will you go and throw yourself away on a shipping-clerk what kind of a life is that for an intellectual girl like you that is learned to understand all about international affairs?" he says. "Why you will go and live in some hole with him and you will have eleven babies and spend your life over a washtub and it is a crime."

"I know it is hard," I says, "but you talk about the plain people and what they think—"

"Oh to hell with the plain people!" he says. "That is all bunk and you know it"—just like that he says it and of course I am shocked and I do not want him to keep his arm around me then.

I says, "Mr. Edgerton," I says, "you are going now to be a shirt-stuffer or whatever you call it for the brass kings and so I suppose you have got to feel like that about the plain people and trample them beneath your heel," I says, "but I am going to stay one of them like I have always been because there is my Mom and my Pop and my kid brothers and sisters and a good honest boy that I have promised to wait for. And I am very much obliged to you and I like you

very much as I have always done but it makes me sad to see that you are going to be cynical and lose all your ideals," I says.

And so then he sees it is no use and he says, "Then you are going to stay a Field Grammarian Mame?"

I says, "About that I cannot tell," I says. "Would it be right for me to keep the job if I am not doing no work for you and the Spokesman?"

"Oh Mame," he says, "you are too fine a patriot to be living in these degenerate times. Of course you can keep the job for you have earned a hundred times the salary and if that poor little Shrimp in the big white house had the sense to of took your advice you would of saved Him for another term. But now I don't know what will happen to Him."

I says, "Is He going to have somebody to write His speeches for Him?"

"My God of course," he says, "that poor Fish He could not write a speech for an Epsom Salts convention."

"And then who is to do it?" I says and he tells me that Mr. Grandaddy Prows is got back from Europe and him and Senator Buttles is had a row as to which is to name the new Secretary and so they have left it to Mr. Edgerton as usual and he has picked out a newspaper friend of his and he says, "Mame you will have to stand by him and help him because when I look back on my past then I am sorry for this one's future."

And I says, "Let me meet him at once Mr. Edgerton," and he says, "So that is all you care about me!" and I says, "I am thinking about my duty to the plain people of this great country," and he says, "Mamie Riggs when they have the first Woman Spokesman of this great country you have got to be Her."

So then we make a date to meet the new Secretary for lunch tomorrow and I come home and there Mom I get your letter telling me that you have saw Walter and he has agreed to believe that I am good and pure and that he still loves me and oh Mom I am so glad I did not yield to that fearful temptation out there on the park bench in the moonlight!

P. S. Well Mom I have just got back from having lunch with the new Secretary and gee it is so wonderful I am more happy than I know how to write. For he is a good man and very serious and I do not think he will ever be cynical like I

fear Mr. Edgerton is got to be. And he is very polite and respectful and says how he has heard what fine ideas I have give to Mr. Edgerton and he wants me to help him because he knows what a hard time he is going to have especially at the beginning.

And I says, "Yes Mr. Porkin," for that is his name, "you will find it hard because there is many questions that people is trying to trap the Spokesman into talking about and He is not being able to keep so quiet as He used to, and it will mean His ruin because there is just nothing He can say and why does He not say it? For example," I says, "there is this business about the Bolshiviki count when he comes here there will be no end of a row to know why he can't talk what he wants to and then maybe when his wife gets well she will want to know if she can talk and you know how much harder it is to shut up a woman," I says. "And then there is this business about the big banker that is in the cabinet Mr. Lemon or Melon or whatever fruit he is and why he does not stop the bootlegging business while he is making the whiskey and why he is got all the income taxes refunded for his companies and why he is allowed to charge as high as he wants for all the aluminum that us women is got to have in our kitchens. You can just see there is nothing the Spokesman can say about all that and you have got to see that He says it. And there is this business about our lending money to all these here Dago countries where the young secretaries of the state department is got noble wives," I says, "and about the Spokesman having hid the reports of the commission or what ever it is called that wanted to have the price of sugar cut down and ruin all them sugar kings that is keeping up our prosperity. I tell you Mr. Porkin," I says, "I have been studying hard and if there was time I could tell you a hundred different things that if anybody can ever get the Spokesman talking about then He is done for the rest of His life," I says, "and your job is just one and that is to hammer into His Head day and night that when you have got nothing you can say then you must say it and nothing else."

And he is listening to every word and it is plain he is impressed and right in the middle of it he reaches over the table and he says, "Miss Riggs, shake hands with me," he says, "for in you I have a political counsellor and you must promise to stand by me and together we will save Him."

Then I says, "Mr. Porkin, we will shake hands but what I am trying to do is not so much to save Him as to save the

American people from the great pain of finding out about Him."

And so Mom we are friends even better than I have been with Mr. Edgerton and you need have no more worry about the future of

Your high-up daughter

MAME.

THE END

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